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Spring election



City of Fitchburg mayoral candidates, from left, Steve Arnold, Jason Gonzalez and Marc Jones answered questions from the Fitchburg Star and the community at a forum Thursday, Feb. 2.

Mayor, challengers spar

Gonzalez, Jones clash with Arnold on leadership, development

SCOTT GIRARD
Unified Newspaper Group

The three City of Fitchburg mayoral candidates did not have to prove they were the best option for voters at a Feb. 2 forum hosted by the Fitchburg Star.

They just had to avoid being the least popular, as the lowest vote-getter in the Feb. 21 primary election will be eliminated from the race, leaving the final two candidates to battle it out until the April 4 general election.

Incumbent Mayor Steve Arnold, District 3 Ald. Jason Gonzalez and former Town Board and Common Council member Marc Jones spent two hours in front of more than 30 audience members discussing topics like leadership, economic development, racial diversity and rural issues. They occasionally agreed, but more frequently, Gonzalez and Jones took shots at Arnold's administration while Arnold explained himself.

Among the 11 questions – six from the Fitchburg Star staff and five submitted by community members – the candidates staked their positions on mostly current local issues, as well as

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hot-button national topics.

Gonzalez, a defense attorney who took advantage of every opportunity he had to speak, called the city “unaffordable” during Arnold’s tenure and said he is the “face of Fitchburg in 2017” and wanted to bring the city together.

Jones, a retired AT&T linesman and current farmer, only occasionally used his entire allotted speaking time. He stressed the importance of communication and mutual respect with residents and potential developers, hoping that whomever is the mayor can help the council “reach some consensus.”

Arnold, a retired information technology professional whose answers generally brought him right to the buzzer at the end of his speaking time, pointed to his “values” of “equity,

sustainability and high quality of life” as ones that represented Fitchburg residents.

Leadership

While the conversation stayed civil, both Gonzalez and Jones had plenty of specific criticism to offer toward Arnold.

“We need a leader who is going to listen, work with others and compromise, not polarize,” Gonzalez said.

Jones did not limit his criticism to Arnold, though he never specifically mentioned Gonzalez.

“I’m very unhappy with the current mayor and the infighting that goes on amongst all of the council members,” Jones said.

Arnold acknowledged that the “atmosphere at the council ... is something that we all contribute to,” and cited differences between how he and his predecessor, Shawn Pfaff, handled communication with alders. He added that many of the political controversies that have occurred during his tenure – from cul-de-sacs and vetoes to sidewalks and tax increment financing – came

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Diversity and dialogue

Library spotlights black community with speaker, kids program

KATE NEWTON

Unified Newspaper Group

As videos of police shootings of unarmed black men played at a local presentation last month, Madison Police Department officer Corey Saffold appeared onscreen to ruefully ask, “So why am I a police officer?”

As a black man working in law enforcement, that question holds weight that Saffold’s white peers don’t have to carry when they put on their badge each day, he explained during a Jan. 19 presentation at the Promega BioPharmaceutical Technology Center. Grappling with what he calls the “paradox” of maintaining those two identities, Saffold was inspired to partner with the Wisconsin Humanities Council’s “Working Lives Project” last year to lead “open and honest discussions” on the issue at libraries and other locations around the state.

The Fitchburg Public Library collaborated with the project to host him for an hour-long talk and question-and-answer session, and several weeks later, celebrated Black History Month by introducing a “Black Books Matter” storytime during one of its regular kids’ programs.

Children listened at the Feb. 6 event as youth services assistant Tiffani Roltgen read



Photo by Kate Newton

Youth services assistant Tiffani Roltgen shows kids some items they can use to match to their unique skin tone during the Fitchburg Public Library’s first “Black Books Matter” storytime Monday, Feb. 6. Part of the aim of the storytime was to encourage kids to be happy in their own skin, no matter what color.

from picture books like “Our Children Can Soar,” which introduced them to influential black figures like Rosa Parks and Ruby Bridges, and “If You Plant a Seed,” a story written by a black author that urged the importance of kindness.

Roltgen told parents at the Feb. 6 event that while the kids “maybe won’t understand” the nuances of the topic surrounding equal rights and diversity, it was “a good starting point for celebration” of acceptance and being happy in your own skin, no matter the color. And while Saffold’s discussion was aimed at a decidedly older audience, the goal was the same: to spark a dialogue.

“What I’m doing tonight is really giving you my raw and honest opinion as to what it means to be a black police officer in today’s society, at a time when there is so much unrest between the black community and police, and there are men that look like me who are being gunned down by police,” Saffold said.

While he didn’t shy from criticism of law enforcement, Saffold, who works as an educational resource officer at Madison West High School, urged the audience to remember the negative interactions that go viral on social media represent a tiny portion of officers’ day-to-day interactions with the public.

“That’s just one of the things that we have to accept in this field, that we’re going to be portrayed a certain way, and there’s nothing we can do about that but continue to be courteous and professional,” he said.

Using several high-profile examples caught on video – including the shooting death of unarmed South Carolina man Walter Scott in 2015 by police and, more recently, the mistreatment of a black family by an officer in Fort Worth – Saffold stressed that unconscious biases influencing people to believe black men are an inherent threat is something law enforcement



Photo by Kate Newton

Madison Police Department officer Corey Saffold, who works as a school resource officer at Madison West High School, addresses the crowd during a program titled “The Paradox of Being a Black Police Officer in Today’s Society” Thursday, Jan. 19, in the Promega’s BioPharmaceutical Technology Center. The talk, part of the Wisconsin Humanities Council’s “Working Lives Project,” welcomed input from the public on contentious issues surrounding the law enforcement community, including discussion on viral videos depicting police shootings of unarmed black men.

desperately need to “get in check” to save lives and learn to treat every individual with “dignity.”

“These situations just keep happening, and we can’t catch a break,” Saffold said. “I have to edit my videos to stay up to date. That’s bad when I do this presentation and I have to keep editing it, just to stay current.”

Saffold urged attendees to be aware of their own biases and seek a better understanding of how police are trained and why they react the way they do in stressful situations. Mayor Steve Arnold said the city’s Citizen Academy, which starts in September, would be an effective way to gain that insight.

Fitchburg Police Department Lt. Chad Brecklin told the Star after the presentation that while Fitchburg is

“facing the same challenges” as departments around the country in terms of community relations, the department has “done a number of things over the past several years to try to better ourselves.” That includes prioritizing new training and strengthening existing policies focused on “fair and impartial policing,” implicit biases, weapons transition and de-escalation and crisis intervention.

“I think we have a long history of being community-oriented and also ensuring fairness, respect and making sure we’re courteous with people,” he added. “We always talk about the Golden Rule, and it’s really that simple. You treat people how you want to be treated.”

Contact Kate Newton at kate.newton@wcinet.com.



Richard Hammersley

Fitchburg City Council
4th District - Seat 8

Background

- Has 3 Adult Children and 4 Grandkids
- 50 Year Fitchburg Resident Homeowner
- 45 Year Retiree of Hammersley Stone
- 2 Year United States Army Veteran
- 1955 Verona Area High School Graduate
- 4 Year Fitchburg Council Member (2001-2005)

Community Involvement

- Member/Adjutant American Legion Post 385 28 years
- Wisconsin Farm Bureau Member (past)
- Former Fitchburg Volunteer Fireman 9 years
- Former Member Fitchburg Plan Commission 3 years
- Former Member Fitchburg Board of Appeals 1 year

Vote Tuesday - April 4th

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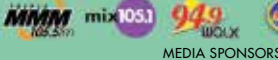
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City of Fitchburg

Rule reiterates sidewalk prohibition

Language requiring neighbor support likely to be repeated in bike/ped plan

SCOTT GIRARD
Unified Newspaper Group

There will be no sidewalks installed in established City of Fitchburg neighborhoods without at least 75 percent neighbor support, based on a rule that passed this week.

The rule appeared to satisfy the concerns of many residents worried the city would retrofit their neighborhoods with sidewalks, but it's unclear whether it will have any actual effect.

The Common Council unanimously approved a new resolution, R-185-16, similar to R-75-10, which was approved in 2010 but was set to be superseded by the upcoming update to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The plan technically will supersede this new rule, as well, according to city staff analysis.

Public input for that update in recent months showed dozens of citizens opposed to sidewalks being installed in their neighborhoods, and that led to language prohibiting sidewalks in the plan.

But some still were not confident in the plan's language – with many suspicious of Mayor Steve Arnold's motives despite no public plan to install sidewalks anywhere – and asked alders to reup R-75-10 to give them more confidence.

"I strongly believe that the 2017 Bike and Ped Plan is not the desired level of protection to prevent sidewalk installation in

existing neighborhoods that the majority of residents have been asking for for six years," resident Glen Unger told the council Tuesday. "My wife and I don't want to live with constant fear of sidewalks ruining our front yard and that as senior citizens we would be responsible for maintaining and be liable for them."

Once the new Bike and Ped plan passes, though, it would supersede anything approved at an earlier date – including the resolution Tuesday.

"The latest action of this body is the law of the land, per se," city administrator Patrick Marsh said, based on a conversation with the city attorney that morning. "If that plan was approved with different language it would supersede the language being discussed tonight."

Alders expressed their intent to change the language of the plan to match the resolution.

The resolution prohibits new sidewalks in neighborhoods without them unless 75 percent of neighbors approve, which was updated from a previous version that required unanimous approval from affected property owners. Ald. Carol Poole (Dist. 1), who brought the new version forward, said it was a "fair compromise" after she had heard some concerns about the unanimous language.

Though some alders expressed support for the unanimous language, they ultimately agreed to the compromise of 75 percent.

Poole blamed a lack of trust for the tensions the issue of sidewalks has caused in recent years.

"When you say one thing and do another over and over again, this creates this

distrust," she said. "(This will) send a message to future councils that this is the will of the people and this is our true intent."

She acknowledged that the resolution could be changed by those future councils, though.

"We're never going to have a permanent solution," she said. "We're going to have to watch. But at least this would give us a belt and suspenders for awhile."

The updated version also limits shared-use paths, which Mayor Steve Arnold unsuccessfully asked to have removed from the resolution.

Arnold also began to comment on the allegations about him wanting to install sidewalks in the city, whether residents wanted them or not, but Ald. Jason Gonzalez (D-3) called for a vote – which immediately ends discussion – after Arnold made a single comment on the topic.

"It has been alleged that I have a secret plan to put sidewalks everywhere," Arnold said. "That is not the case."

Gonzalez is one of two candidates running against Arnold for mayor this spring.

Ald. Jake Johnson (D-4) praised residents for being so heavily involved in the process.

"We hear you loud and clear," Johnson said. "I really wish that every issue would have as many people involved."

Contact Scott Girard at ungreporter@wcinet.com and follow him on Twitter

Bike/ped plan heading to council vote

A plan for improving bicycle and pedestrian connectivity throughout the city is nearing completion.

The City of Fitchburg Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan is on track to be addressed at various commissions, and will potentially be adopted by Common Council on Feb. 28, several days after a public hearing.

The public hearing and proposed action to recommend a draft of the plan to Council for approval will be held at 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 20, during the Transportation and Transit Committee meeting at City Hall.

City resource/project planner Wade Thompson said the plan acts as a vision for the future of walking and biking in the city. It does not have a connection to budgets for capital improvements.

Alders are likely to address a controversial part of the plan discussing the potential installation

If You Go
What: Bike/Ped Plan public hearing
When: 7 p.m. Feb. 20
Where: City Hall
Info: fitchburgbikepedplan.org

(R-185-16) that states there will be no sidewalks installed in established City of Fitchburg neighborhoods without at least 75 percent neighbor support, and the language in the bike/ped plan is expected to be adjusted to be consistent with that rule.

Thompson said from a staff perspective, sidewalks can do a lot for a city, by promoting safety, connectivity and accessibility, but they have a complicated history in the city.

– Samantha Christian

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Aldersperson District 4, Seat 7 City of Fitchburg

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Letters to the editor

City should have found way to save trees

Friday morning the city destroyed four very lovely, very old trees on the south side of Lacy at Mica to accommodate a shared use path as part of the Lacy Road reconstruction. I am among several opposed to the removal of these trees and the destruction of more to come.

It was also brought to my attention that someone made an offer to pay to relocate this stretch of path behind the property in order to save these trees, but that offer was declined because they wanted to keep the path straight.

I have been told that the time for public comment is over (“shut up”). In honor of Black History month, I will borrow from Dr. King, “The time is always right to do the right thing.”

This path should have, and still could be, routed along the new development occurring on Nobel Lane and connect back at Lacy by running it through Quarry Hill park on the east end and Research Park or one of the existing paths on the west end. The level of traffic on Lacy Road alone makes running the path elsewhere a better option.

I also propose that any future public building projects require that the City brightly tag trees that they plan to remove for a period of no less than one month, in order for folks to view the full magnitude of their loss. If necessary I will petition to make this a reality.

Fitchburg can and should serve as a beacon for environmentally sensitive practices in building and design as these practices provide the longest lasting benefit to all people.

Teresa Santulli
City of Fitchburg

Clauder will represent us well

I knew Tom Clauder when he patrolled our streets as a Fitchburg Police Officer. I knew him when he was our mayor and made Fitchburg a better place to live. I know as an Alderman he will represent us again, just like he has in the past and be a voice for his constituents. Vote for Tom Clauder for District 4 Alderman on April 4.

Michael Barry
City of Fitchburg

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Healthy living

Negative weight talk can be damaging

The old saying, “Sticks and bones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me” doesn’t always hold true. Especially when it comes to weight talk and your children.

Perhaps you casually decline dessert and mention you’re trying to lose weight or complain how you don’t like how you look in your clothes right now. Or maybe your kid is gaining weight a little too quickly and you cut her a smaller slice of cake than the rest of the family.

What seem like inconsequential comments or actions can have a negative impact on your child’s future body image and eating patterns.

Research has shown that “weight talk,” or any comments made by a family member about his or her own weight or comments made to the child to encourage weight loss, can cause feelings of shame and embarrassment for the child or place thoughts in her mind that his or her value is in size and body appearance.

No loving family member ever has this intent – we only want what’s best for our child, after all. However, no matter how innocent an offhand comment may seem, you never know if it’ll lead to a damaging, long-term consequence.

Unfortunately, the scarring effect of one comment is just as detrimental as repeated comments. Weight talk to a child or adolescent can lead to lasting dissatisfaction with her body (whether overweight or not), disordered eating or unhealthy dieting as an adult.

There are positive things you can do, however, when you have a child who may benefit from some weight loss.

It can be a challenge navigating through this territory. The key is not so much what you say, but what you do.



Hoerr

Sometimes words can hurt. The solution can be as simple as talking less and doing more: Talk less about weight and start doing more to make your home a healthier place.

Here are a few ways you can help ensure healthy habits and body images in your family for years to come:

Family focus on health

You can make an influence on your family’s eating habits without even talking with them about it. One of the most effective ways is simply by focusing on healthy living and habits as a family.

Actions really do speak louder than words sometimes. Simply by modeling healthy behavior – like keeping healthy food readily available in the house, not buying soda regularly, or encouraging physical activity by going on family bike rides – can help your family stay on track and maintain positive self-esteem.

Be comfortable

Rather than dwelling on your own imperfections, your weight, or how you wish you looked, be confident and comfortable in your own skin and show that confidence to your children.

If you continue to work toward being a healthier version of yourself, you’ll notice a natural change in how you feel, anyway.

Ignore the scale

The scale can be useful to track progress, but it is still simply an outcome of what you or your child is doing. Instead of focusing on the scale and losing weight, it’s best to zero in on healthy eating habits instead.

For example, have conversations with your child about eating more fruits and vegetables, so he has the nutrients needed to grow tall and stay focused at school.

Community Voices

Civic duty is weighty, but not always a burden

I didn’t vote in the last presidential election.

I couldn’t vote because I’m 16 years old. However, I learned that I could still exercise my rights and responsibilities as a citizen.

The day after the presidential inauguration, I marched along with at least 75,000 others toward the Capitol in Madison with a unified goal: to strengthen the community and promote equality for all.

What does it mean for me, a student at Verona Area High School whose usual concerns are homework and social media, to participate in a national action, the Women’s March?

I put my hair in a ponytail and stuffed my 5-pound world history textbook into my backpack. I wasn’t sure if there would be downtime at a rally, and I had studying to do.



Castronovo

The mass of motivational signs, the never-ending shuffling of winter boots, and the chants of students, adults and activists was enough to make me certain that this was what democracy looked like.

In a crowd of complete strangers, I’d never felt more comfortable. While the participants may have marched for different reasons, we all realized the necessity of finding our voice in the community.

The Women’s March, which allowed people to come together and unite in a safe space, was a stark contrast to my high school the morning after Election Day. Emotions ran high, and students began to trade verbal and cyber insults. The school superintendent, Dean Gorrrell, sent a letter of concern about an “increase in [the] number of culturally insensitive, derogatory and discriminatory type comments.”

While bullying and offensive remarks were not new occurrences at school, the election intensified distrust among the students.

Eat the same

Offering one child a rice cake with fruit while the other gets waffles is not helping the situation at hand. Being treated differently than her other siblings can be hurtful or embarrassing.

So provide the same meal for the entire family. And if dessert is an option, offer small servings for everyone to enjoy.

Avoid commenting at all

If you’re about to make a comment to your child related to food, eating habits, weight or size, stop first to think if it could have a damaging outcome.

Even positive comments about weight or size can backfire in the long run. The best solution is to refrain from making any comment at all.

Positive reinforcement

Even if your child’s weight isn’t moving, don’t forget that it’s not about the weight. Any positive behavior changes being made are worth encouraging and reinforcing.

Family meals together

Studies have found that sitting down for meals together as a family most nights during the week is protective against disordered eating and frequent dieting among children.

As a parent, mealtime is also a perfect time to model good eating habits and healthy food choices to your kids when you’re gathered around the table together.

Kara Hoerr, MS, RDN, CD, is the registered dietitian at the Fitchburg Hy-Vee. Contact her at khoerr@hy-vee.com or 273-5125.

This information is not intended as medical advice. Please consult a medical professional for individual advice.

In the weeks that followed, many of my classmates felt discouraged and dejected by the election’s outcome. But the march was uplifting.

As a high school student, it’s easy to think that my presence is minuscule in comparison to nationwide events. But I’m not just a teen: I’m also a citizen. This local rally has made me realize the importance, as well as my civic duty, of taking part in political events.

As citizens, it’s not so much about our beliefs or a name on the ballot. It’s about how our beliefs shape our actions and influence our community.

By the end of the rally, my unopened history book had proved useless. My shoulders ached from carrying the weight of literally a thousand pages of history. Yet I was uplifted by the realization that I was taking part in something bigger.

History, I learned, is not only found in books.

Maya Castronovo is a sophomore at Verona Area High School.

Gonzalez would bring needed change

I am writing to urge my neighbors and fellow Fitchburg residents to support Jason Gonzalez for mayor in the upcoming primary election on Tuesday, Feb. 21.

I have gotten to know Jason and he is smart, compassionate and a proven listener. He is a strong leader and committed to public service. I am most impressed with his campaign to bring

affordable housing to Fitchburg for families. Jason was also one of the alders who supported no sidewalks in existing neighborhoods.

We need a change from the existing political atmosphere and Jason is the one to do that for us. Please consider voting for Jason Gonzalez.

Jayne Werner
City of Fitchburg

Gonzalez will end divisiveness

My wife and I, as 23-year Fitchburg residents, are proud to support Jason Gonzalez for mayor. We view Jason as the individual best able to end the divisiveness dominating our city government.

Our experience is that he listens to citizens’ concerns, rather than lecturing them. He also realizes homeowners can not shoulder more property tax increases and recognizes our city needs more middle-income family homes, rather than more apartments.

He recognizes the mayor’s role is not to micromanage city staff, but instead to actively promote Fitchburg to companies who can create jobs and expand the corporate tax base so we are not so dependent on homeowners.

We love living in Fitchburg and believe it is time to put a new leader in the mayor’s office so we can again move forward together.

David and Deborah Olien
City of Fitchburg

King James Way Park nears final approval

KATE NEWTON
Unified Newspaper Group

A community-led effort to bring a new park to the King James Way neighborhood cleared one of the last hurdles for final approval this month.

While no one was present to give input at a public hearing during the Park Commission’s Feb. 2 meeting, Parks, Recreation and Forestry director Scott Endl said the park has “been pretty vetted through the public process.” That included a community survey sent to residents living within a quarter-mile of the proposed site for the park at 2921 King James Way, as well as community neighborhood meetings that resulted in several adjustments to the park’s design.

“People show up when they’re really opposed to something, so I take this as a really good sign,” Ald. Jake Johnson (Dist. 4) joked at the meeting before the commission recommended approval of the King James Way Park Master Plan. It will now go to the Common Council, which will have the option to approve the final park plan at its Feb. 14 meeting.

The park would include a half-court basketball court and play structure on what is now a vacant lot owned by the city. Residents also suggested the addition of a grill, paved entrance from the street on the lot’s south side and a landscaped berm at the north end to help address privacy and noise concerns posed by some direct neighbors.

The parks department and community organizers who spearheaded block parties on the lot last summer hope the new addition will address what Endl has referred to as a “deficiency” of easily accessible recreational options for youth in the neighborhood. The city purchased the lot in 2013 after identifying that deficiency in 2010, and while Endl said the hope is to still purchase the adjacent lot on the property’s west side to further expand the park and add additional amenities like a swingset and gazebo, that lot is currently not for sale.

If approved by the council, the project will go out to bid in March. Construction would likely continue into early summer, with completion hinging on the timing of the city’s paving

contract for the half-court basketball court. Other work, like the installation of the play structure, could begin immediately once the project is bid and the work is approved by the Common Council, likely in April.

At the meeting, Endl discussed some concerns with the commission that visitors to the park could stand on the proposed berm at the back of the park and possibly see into neighboring residents’ yards, suggesting they add trees and “possibly” some shrubs without elevating the area.

“We’re going to have to go out on the site and see where these things are going to be” for landscaping, Endl said.

Contact Kate Newton at kate.newton@wcinet.com.

Felony charges for ‘lookout’ of 12-year-old robber

KATE NEWTON
Unified Newspaper Group

The 25-year-old Madison man who Fitchburg police say assisted a 12-year-old boy in robbing a local Pick ‘n Save last month has been charged with two felonies.

Jordan N. Chislom is charged with being party to a robbery with use of force and party to theft of movable property greater than \$5,000, as well as misdemeanor possession of marijuana, according to online court records. If convicted of all charges, he faces a maximum of 21 years in prison, plus possible enhancers for prior convictions.

Chislom admitted to police Jan. 9 he had acted as a “lookout,” according to a criminal complaint, while

the boy, identified only by his initials, took approximately \$5,022 in cash from a register at the Cahill Main store at about 9 p.m. Jan. 7. An employee who witnessed the incident reported to police the boy had “jumped the counter” in the service area and pried the register open with a screwdriver before attempting to run to a different part of the store, and that he punched her in the ribcage when she attempted to stop him. She also stated the boy, who was 11 at the time, had yelled, “Jordan, come help me,” as he ran away.

After sending out a Dane County-wide crime alert, Fitchburg officers identified Chislom as a potential suspect.

Read the full story online at ConnectFitchburg.com.

Lacy Road closing to through traffic in May

SCOTT GIRARD
Unified Newspaper Group

Through traffic will not be allowed on Lacy Road from early May through mid-October as the road undergoes reconstruction.

The city presented its final design plans Thursday night to about two dozen residents. The project is the culmination of years of planning and what turned into a heated and controversial debate throughout 2015, as the city worked to balance competing project goals, namely of minimizing right-of-way acquisition and improving bicycle and pedestrian accessibility on the road.

Additions once the project is completed will include a shared-use path, left-turn lanes at two intersections, a roundabout at the Fahey Glen intersection and new sanitary and water main service.

“We knew that we needed to do some things at the intersections to make the capacity and operations of Lacy Road

On the Web

To see diagrams of the plans, the slideshow presented Thursday or more information on the project, visit:

fitchburgwi.gov/2267/Lacy-Road-Reconstruction

function,” said city transportation project engineer Ahnaray Bizjak.

The deadline for bids is March 14, and Bizjak said city staff will know more about how a contractor plans to stage construction once that contractor is selected.

Some homes on the street will have to pay to have their homes hooked up to the new sanitary sewer service or the water main, and homeowners asked Bizjak what the timeline would be as they begin to reach out to plumbers. Bizjak said that work will need to be completed by some time in spring 2018, and that homeowners will be given a 90-day notice when



Photo submitted

Trees along Lacy Road have been trimmed in preparation for removal for a mixed-used path.

The exact date is known.

The newly reconstructed road will also include a curb and gutter, 4-foot bike lane and speed display sign, which will show drivers how fast they are going. Many residents expressed concerns about how fast people drive on the road, which has a 35 mph speed limit.


Traffic during construction will detour to East Cheryl Drive and South Syene Road. Troy Pankratz, a project engineer for consultant Mead and Hunt, said closing Lacy to through traffic will allow the contractor more “flexibility in their work options” and to finish the construction in one summer, rather than spreading it over two. He stressed that Lacy Road residents and those who can access their streets only through Lacy Road will “always have access” to their homes.

The city is set to begin removing trees in the coming weeks to prepare for construction. Bizjak said residents will receive fliers three days before a tree is set to be removed in case they have any questions. The project plan also includes new trees planted in the terrace between the road and the shared-use path.

Contact Scott Girard at ungreporter@wcinet.com and follow him on Twitter @sgirard9.

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Gonzalez
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About Jason:

- ★ Alder - Fitchburg City Council
- ★ Former Firefighter/EMT
- ★ Lifelong area resident
- ★ Attorney, Small Business Owner and Employer
- ★ B.S. & J.D. from UW-Madison

As an Alder, Jason has:

- ★ Stopped Mayor Arnold’s 10% tax increase and 73% increase in capital spending.
- ★ Stood up to Mayor Arnold and worked to help create jobs in all parts of Fitchburg.
- ★ Listened to residents by stopping Mayor Arnold’s assault to retrofit existing neighborhoods with sidewalks.

As Mayor, Jason will:

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- ★ Push for affordable housing for renters, homeowners, and seniors.
- ★ Balance the need for quality services with taxpayers ability to pay.

jasoncgonzalez@gmail.com
jason4fitchburg.com

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adno=504930-01

– *Kate Newton*

Info: beyondthepage.info

- 3:30-5 p.m., “Kids Tech

- 7:30 p.m., Common Council meeting, City Hall council chambers

• 6-7 p.m., Big Brothers
Big Sisters informational

- 7:30 p.m., Common Council meeting, City Hall council chambers

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Coming Up

Absentee voting

The City of Fitchburg will offer in-person absentee voting in advance of the Feb. 21 primary election from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday until Friday, Feb. 17, in the city clerk’s office. For information, call 270-4200.

Free community meal

Those in need of a hearty lunch are welcome to attend free community meals from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays through May at the Badger Prairie Needs Network, 1200 E. Verona Ave.

The meal is free and usually includes soup and salad, pasta or rice, a chicken, pork or beef dish, a vegetarian/vegan selection, bread, a dessert and drink. No reservations are required. Bring your own takeaway container between 12:30-1 p.m. if you would like to take leftovers with you (as available).

Those interested in volunteering can register on BPNN’s volunteers page at bpnn.org, or contact the meal coordinator at kitchen@bpnn.org or 848-2499.

Spry Society

Learn more about the “Spry Society,” a free program at the senior center that offers an opportunity for those living with mild cognitive impairment to socialize beginning at 10:30 a.m. Friday, March 17.

Family and friends of those affected are also welcome to participate, and there is an interview that must be completed before attending the group. Meetings will repeat every other Friday at 10:30 a.m. For information, contact Bonnie at 203-8500 or bnutt@alz.org.

AARP tax help

Those seeking free and simple tax return help can make 45-minute appointments at the senior center for Fridays, Feb. 17 and 24 and March 24 and 31.

Participants’ taxes must be straightforward, and they must bring all necessary paperwork to the appointment. For information or to make an appointment, call 270-4290.

Reading program

Escape the cold and cuddle up with a good book during the library’s winter reading program, which runs through Feb. 27. Stop by to pick up Winter Reading bingo cards; those who get a bingo will earn a reward. For information, call 729-1760.

Spanish classes

Both beginner and intermediate Spanish speakers can take classes at the senior center beginning in late February.

The Beginner Spanish class will run for eight weeks from 10:15-11:15 a.m. Tuesdays, Feb. 28 through April 18. The Intermediate Spanish class will also run for eight weeks, from 9-10 a.m. Tuesdays, Feb. 28 through April 18. Both classes cost \$50, and registration is required.

For information or to register, call 270-4290.

Play discussion

Learn about the short stories and the creative team that brought the classic

musical “Fiddler on the Roof” to life on the Broadway stage during a program from 1-2 p.m. Friday, Feb. 10, at the Fitchburg Community Center, 5510 Lacy Road.

A quartet of singers from Four Seasons Theatre will lead the program, which is free and open to the public. This program is produced with support from the Beyond the Page program, a joint effort of the Dane County Library Service and the Madison Community Foundation.

For information, contact Elizabeth Zimdars at elizabeth.zimdars@fitchburgwi.gov or 729-1791.

Pinewood Derby

Fitchburg’s Cub Scout Pack will be among the area Scouts to participate in the sixth annual Mohawk District Pinewood Derby from 8-11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 11, at Smart Motors, 5901 Odana Road, Madison.

Close to 75 Madison area cub scouts and boy scouts are expected to race their pinewood creations while learning about topics related to physics and safety from 9:30-11 a.m., followed by a trophy presentation. Weigh-ins and other activities will begin at 8 a.m., and the event will include a drone demonstration by the Middleton Fire Department. The cost to participate is \$10; racers can register at the event until 9 a.m. For information or to register online, visit scoutingevent.com/620-mohawkpwd2017.

Mending Day

The Badger Prairie Needs Network, 1200 E. Verona Ave., will host its monthly Mending Day from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 11.

Those who need a hem or tear to be fixed, a button sewn on, or other mending work can have it done for free on a first-come, first-served basis. Some items may be declined due to the complexity of the issue that needs resolving, and zippers cannot be repaired. There is a 30-minute limit per person. For information, call 279-7596.

WhatsApp class

The library will offer a class on the app “WhatsApp” from 7-8 p.m. Monday, Feb. 13. The class will demonstrate how to use the app, which provides fast, simple and secure messaging and calling for free. Participants should bring their own devices, and registration is required.

For information or to register, call 729-1763.

Valentine’s storytime

Families can put on their favorite pajamas and come to the library for a Valentine’s Day-themed evening storytime from 6-6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 14.

The program will feature songs, books and activities to promote early literacy, as well as a calming craft following storytime. The program is geared toward ages 2-5, with siblings welcome. For information, call 729-1760.

Smartphone 101

Learn how to get the most out of your smartphone at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 15, at the senior center.

The program will be led by Dave St. Amant of

Community PC, LLC, and registration is required. For information or to register, call 270-4290.

Service program

Join the library for its new monthly “Community Helpers” service program from 6-7 p.m. Thursdays, Feb. 16 and March 16, at the library.

In February, participants will make pet toys to donate to a local animal shelter, and in March, they’ll write letters of appreciation to veterans. Those counting service time for National Honors Society or church groups can record this hour toward their goal. This program is geared toward ages 13-17. For information, call 729-1760.

Historical reenactment

Performance artist Jessica Michna will perform as Laura Ingalls Wilder, author of the “Little House” series, during “Jessica Michna Live Theatre” at 12:40 p.m. Friday, Feb. 17, at the senior center.

Born in Pepin, Wis., in 1867, Wilder’s family moved many times. She became a teacher at age 15 and was married by age 18. Michna, who researches each of her subjects and answers questions about the characters after her presentation, will portray many of Wilder’s moments growing up.

For information, call 270-4290.

Library Explorers

Kids ages 5-8 can explore the library behind the scenes and sharpen their librarian skills as they complete a Mini Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) certification during a “Library Explorers” program from 4-5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 17. For information, call 729-1760.

Youth Apprenticeship

The Monona-Dane County School Consortium will host a family information night for its Youth Apprenticeship program at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 20, at the Biopharmaceutical Technology Center Institute, 5445 E. Cheryl Pkwy.

Family information nights are designed to inform students and families how Youth Apprenticeship can give high school students a jumpstart on their future careers in areas like agriculture and transportation. Most participants earn college credit for completion of the YA program. For information, visit desc.org or search “Dane County School

Consortium” on Facebook.

Tech classes

People can learn about 3-D printing and how to use Facebook at two classes offered by the library from 7-8 p.m. Mondays, Feb. 20 and 27.

The first class, “3-D Printer Basics,” will teach attendees how the technology works before they use Tinkercad to start creating their own designs. The Facebook class on Feb. 27 will explore how to request friends, share pictures and make status updates. Privacy and security settings will also be covered.

Registration is required for both classes. For information, call 729-1763.

Journalist visit

Gayle Worland, a features reporter at the Wisconsin State Journal, will lead the “Learning Annex” program at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, at the senior center.

Worland primarily covers topics such as music, theater and visual arts in the Madison area, and has also worked on the education beat and as a night reporter for the paper. She will discuss her career, including past posts at the Chicago Tribune and Washington Post, and her favorite interviews.

For information, call 270-4290.

Cookbook club

Make a batch of your favorite soup and bring it to the Cookbook Club meeting from 11 a.m. to noon Thursday, Feb. 23, at the library. Attendees should bring the cookbook their recipe came from, and will sample each other’s soups. Utensils and beverages will be provided. For information, call 729-1760.

Kids tech program

Kids ages 5-12 can get acquainted with technology by taking it apart from 3:30-5 p.m. Friday, Feb. 24, at the library. This program will involve kids taking apart a computer, and registration is required. For information or to register, call 729-1762.

Winter carnival

Nine Springs Golf and Disc Course, 2201 Traceway Dr., will host a winter carnival from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 25.

Planned activities include ice skating, s’mores making, a bonfire, skiing and snowshoeing and more, but will only take place if weather permits. The City of Fitchburg police, recreation and fire departments are sponsoring the event, with additional

support from the Madison Police Department, Aldo Leopold Community School and other area organizations.

For information, call 270-4200.

Mayoral forum

The Fitchburg Chamber of Commerce will host a mayoral forum during the March “Business Before 9” event from 7:45 a.m. to 9 a.m. Tuesday, March 7, at Candlewood Suites, 5421 Caddis Bend. The event is free for chamber members and \$25 for non-members. The program will also include alder candidates, and there will be a half-hour meet-and-greet after the forum.

For information, contact Kate Wicker at 288-8284.

Big Brothers/Sisters

Learn more about how to make a difference in the life of a local child by attending an informational meeting for Big Brothers Big Sisters from 6-7 p.m. Wednesday, March 8, at the library. For information, call 729-1763.

3-D printing

Teens ages 13-17 can learn the basics of 3-D printing and using the Tinkercad program to create their own designs during a program from 6-7 p.m. Wednesday, March 8, at the library. Space is limited and registration is required. For information or to register, call 729-1760.

Plumbing basics

Learn the basics of repairing your own toilet, sink or faucet during a “Basic Home Plumbing” program from 6:30-8 p.m. Thursday, March 9, at the library.

Representatives from Project Home will lead the program, and registration is requested. For information or to register, call 729-1763.

Pedal smoothies

Use a bike-mounted blender to make a healthy treat during a “Pedal-Powered Smoothies” program from 4-5 p.m. Friday, March 10, at the library. Kids ages 9-12 can sign up for the 4 p.m. or 4:30 p.m. time slot. For information or to register, call

729-1762.

Film screening

Visit the library for a free screening of “Vel Phillips: Dream Big Dreams,” a Wisconsin Public Television production telling the story of civil rights leader Vel Phillips, from 1:30-3:30 p.m. Saturday, March 11, at the library.

Phillips was the first African-American judge in Wisconsin and the first woman, and African-American, in the nation elected to executive office in state government, as Wisconsin Secretary of State from 1979-1983. This program is presented by WPT’s “Reel to Real” program. For information, call 729-1763.

Aging Mastery

The senior center will bring back the Aging Mastery program, which will run from 1:30-3 p.m. Wednesdays, March 22 through May 24.

The Aging Mastery Program encourages participants to develop behaviors that lead to overall well-being in areas including exercise, sleep, healthy eating and hydration, financial fitness, medication management, advance planning, healthy relationships, fall prevention and community engagement. Limited spots are available and registration is required by March 15; the program, valued at \$100, costs \$25 (make checks payable to the senior center). Scholarships and transportation are available. For information or to register, call 270-4290 or email Jill.Mchone@fitchburgwi.gov.

Referendum info

Representatives from the Verona Area School District will visit the senior center to discuss the upcoming April referendum at 10:45 a.m. Wednesday, March 15.

Attendees will walk away with a fact sheet of information and will have time to ask questions about the potential new high school and other options going on the ballot. For information, call 270-4290.

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What's online

Read the following Verona Area School District stories at ConnectFitchburg.com:

TWI preference enrollment

The school board approved preference enrollment in the Two Way Immersion program for children of all staff. It's likely to lead to an overall policy on staff preference enrollment in the coming months.

VAIS performs for Chinese New Year

Verona Area International School students took their Chinese New Year performance on the road this year to a Jan. 28 celebration at UW-Platteville.

District holds first outreach meeting

VASD officials held the first public outreach meeting on the referendum Monday, Feb. 6.

Perceptions survey coming out this month

Parents and staff will be asked to take a survey this month that is similar to one taken last year, allowing the district to measure its progress and identify areas that need work.

No changes to Late Start in 2017-18

After a few months of consideration, the district will not change Late Start Mondays for the 2017-18 school year. A committee will continue to study the idea for future years.

Summer school pay rate increased

The district increased the pay rate for all staff positions in summer school, including some middle school teachers who would teach students targeted for extra work over the summer. Those positions have been hard to fill in recent years, administrators said.



Kyle Buchmann watches his son Owen, 5, work with the Osmo coding activity at the Jan. 19 Maker Night at Glacier Edge Elementary School.

A night of 'Making'

The four Verona Area School District area attendance elementary schools each hosted a Maker Night Thursday, Jan. 19. The evening allowed parents to see what their children have been working with in the schools' "Maker Spaces," which are focused on allowing students to create, both through technology like coding and old staples like LEGOs.

22 meetings in plan for referendum outreach

SCOTT GIRARD
Unified Newspaper Group

In less than nine weeks, voters will decide whether the Verona Area School District can build a new high school and related projects. That time will be full of communication from the district trying to inform voters about the referendum, its tax impact and why the board decided to ask for it now.

Consultant Jill Huskisson, a communications specialist with Epstein Uhen Architects, told board members Jan. 24 an important goal over the next two months is "not so much what you're pushing out but what you're hearing." "We don't want a community member's question to hit a dead wall," Huskisson said. "We want your community members to know that this is a conversation." That conversation includes 22 separate meetings with community groups in the district, such as the Kiwanis and Optimists clubs, as well as

Outreach dates

Public meetings: March 13, 14, 21

Coffee with a board member: March 7, 9

Senior centers: March 3, 15

Mailings: Mid-February, mid-March, late March

Private meetings: Kiwanis, Optimists, Lions clubs, Verona chamber, VASD staff, "Key Communicators"

with staff at each school site. The public will be invited to attend three referendum information sessions in March and a pair of less-formal meetings, called "coffee chat with the board." Another session will be held March 21 at Glacier Edge Elementary School for Spanish-speaking families. VASD will also mail out three printed informational pieces on the referendum in the coming months, with the first, a fact sheet, planned to arrive in mailboxes the week of Feb. 13. VASD public information officer Kelly Kloepping said Monday she would regularly

update a page on the district's website with information. Huskisson asked board members to bring questions they hear in the community back to Kloepping and the communications team so they have as much time as possible to get accurate information out before the vote. "Every day up through April 4 is an opportunity to refine our information so people can understand it, and that is our goal," she said.

Contact Scott Girard at ungreporter@wcinet.com and follow him on Twitter @sgirard9.

Superintendent plans visits to homes, businesses

SCOTT GIRARD
Unified Newspaper Group

Verona Area School District superintendent Dean Gorrell hopes to add some meetings to his schedule in the next two months. But that will only happen if people are interested in hearing from him directly about the upcoming April referendum. Gorrell told the Press he wants to make "house calls" to interested residents or businesses to talk about the referendum and the process that led to its appearance on the ballot. That would add to the 22 meetings district officials already have planned with

staff, community groups and the public around the district between now and April 4. "There's still something to that really personal touch," Gorrell explained of the idea. The ballot will include three referendum questions: one for \$162.7 million for a new high school and performing arts center; another for \$18.5 million for a pool and outdoor athletic fields; and the third for \$2.3 million on an annual basis to cover increased operating expenses. Explaining the complicated financing is an important reason Gorrell wants to offer the extra outreach. "It's a difficult set of

circumstances to explain," he said. "We want to put a lot of energy in (this effort)." He added that he hoped any visits to someone's home could include neighbors or other interested friends, up to around 20 people, to reach more people at a time. The district can also offer an interpreter to come with Gorrell if any Spanish-speaking families are interested. To request a visit, email referendum@verona.k12.wi.us.

Contact Scott Girard at ungreporter@wcinet.com and follow him on Twitter @sgirard9.

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Oregon School District

SPACE TO LEARN

Newly completed OHS wing designed for collaboration as construction continues elsewhere

SCOTT DE LARUELLE
Unified Newspaper Group

The Oregon School District’s 2014 referendum projects took another big step toward completion Jan. 23 with the opening of a new two-story academic wing at Oregon High School.

The addition – part of the school’s \$46 million make-over that started last April – houses 15 classrooms interspersed with collaborative spaces for students and staff, a main focus of the design. OHS principal Jim Pliner told the Observer Monday that in the few short weeks since it opened, it’s clear that its “surpassed expectations” for both of those key groups.

“They’re thrilled to have this,” he said. “It’s wide open and spacious and in some cases has really innovative furniture groups that foster connections and communication. Some of the teachers remarked that the kids feel really thankful and grateful for the areas and invested in using the spaces.”

Despite all the construction around the school for nearly a year, Pliner said there have been minimal negative effects on the school’s day-to-day operations. Teachers had to double-up occasionally, and there were some issues with the school’s PA system, but “there’s been very little for us to complain about.”

“We’ve kind of learned to live with things a little different, but by and large, there’s been very little disruption to learning,” he said.

The new classrooms fit the “open concept” key to the design phase involved in the



Oregon High School history teacher Kelly McGraw, standing, talks with her students (seated from left) Dillion Ragels, Alesha Blatterman, Angie Correll, Dominic Montour and Brady Gagner, outside the classroom in the new upstairs addition of the school. Many classes can spill out into a collaborative workspace for projects or study hall, where it’s easier to interact with other students.

capital projects referendum work.

At the new wing, the use of sunlight and windows gives a bright, modern feel to the area, and students can plug in a variety of electronic devices around the seating areas.

“It’s very different from what they would traditionally have there,” Pliner said, adding that some students have likened it to a college campus. “The learning spills out into the hallway, and the classrooms have a lot of windows, so lines of sight are maintained easily throughout

the space.”

Students can use the collaborative areas between classrooms during study halls or assigned class times to work on individual or class projects or “connect with one another,” Pliner said.

“It really has been a game-changer,” he said. “I’ve heard that from both staff and students with regularity. Our teachers are really committed to make the best use possible of that space, and there’s a growing excitement up there; I see people pushing boundaries of what’s possible.”

Ongoing work

With the new wing up and running, construction continues in other areas of the OHS campus.

An area for the district’s alternative high school, OASIS – currently located in the Oregon Ice Arena – is being reconstructed as part of the OHS campus and should be finished in April. On the south end of the building, work is also slated for completion that month on a new secure main entrance with an art gallery, administrative

offices, and expanded physical wing, new locker and fitness rooms and a new main gym.

Once that’s complete, the school’s main office and entrance will shift to that end of the school, and student services will eventually relocate to the old main office. Field house renovations will also begin in April, Pliner said, with a goal to finish when school resumes in September.

During summer break, more extensive work will begin on “all the other

interior spaces” involved in the renovation, making the areas “difficult to navigate throughout the summer,” he said. That will limit the usual schedule of summer school and other activities this year.

The Library Media Center will be restored, and the school’s science, technology, engineering, arts and math center will be demolished to make way for a new one in the former math area. Some science classrooms will be renovated, as well as some of the older parts of the school (100 and 300 hallways) to “establish collaborative work areas” similar to those in the new academic wing.

“We’ll get new spaces constructed and new equipment in there, and be ready to go when we open for business in the fall,” Pliner said.

The one area that might not be ready when students return for the 2017-18 school year is the new, expanded cafeteria/commons area, which might take until November to complete.

“That will be one we’ll have to live with after Sept. 1 for a little bit,” he said.

Pliner said school officials plan on holding an open house in a few weeks, and noted that students and staff alike are “very thankful” for the new learning space.

“We appreciate our community support for this project and are really eager to make it something that is a huge asset to our community going forward,” he said.

Email Unified Newspaper Group reporter Scott De Laruelle at scott.delaruelle@wcinet.com.

Oregon School District



Photo by Amber Levenhagen
Gavin Rieder (front), Brianna O’Malley (left) and Lukas Dopart (right) participate in an acting game to figure out who the secret leader is during an acting Engage and Grow breakout led by Verona Area High School theater director Steve Nibbe.

Local talent visits OMS

Oregon Middle School held an Engage and Grow Day Friday, Jan. 27. Students were offered the opportunity to select special presentations throughout the day, designed to teach students using hands-on interactions through acting, improv and writing.

Local author Joshua Miller taught students how to create dynamic and engaging characters while allowing students the opportunity to help create a new character for his next book. Retired Verona teacher and Verona Area High School theater director Steve Nibbe led a breakout session on acting and theater, leading games like charades that teach acting and memory skills.

– Amber Levenhagen

Madison Metropolitan School District Chavez hosts ‘Trail to Success’ for High Ridge families

Chavez Elementary School has been hosting a community outreach program this year for families in the High Ridge Trail neighborhood in Fitchburg.

The “family empowerment and enrichment” nights cover parenting topics like how to protect their children when using the internet, as well as outreach on school initiatives like the social emotional learning kids experience at the school.

The Feb. 14 session will have a “Valentine’s focused activity,” according to the

school’s newsletter, with a theme of demonstrating compassion, love and empathy. The evening will include two sessions, one at 5:30 p.m. and another at 6:30 p.m.

The program is a collaboration between Chavez, Redeemer City Church and Joining Forces for Families.

The events take place at The Pines in Fitchburg.

For information, contact school social worker Andrea Reifsnider at arefsnider2@madison.k12.wi.us.

– Scott Girard

Send it in

Have an idea for a Madison schools story the Fitchburg Star should cover? Whether it’s a schoolwide initiative or a creative classroom project, we’d love to hear it. Email ideas to ungreporter@wcinet.com or call 845-9559 and ask for Scott Girard.

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See something wrong?

The Fitchburg Star does not sweep errors under the rug. If you see something you know or even think is in error, please contact editor Jim Ferolie at 845-9559 or at fitchburgstar@wcinet.com so we can get it right.



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verona.k12.wi.us/referendum

adno=506448-01



Averie, 9, and Jay Maas, of Fitchburg, goof around on the ice together.

Party on the pond

Next ice skating party set for Feb. 11

The first of two ice skating parties organized by the Fitchburg Optimist Club drew skaters of all ages – including a few first-timers – to McKee Farms Park Saturday, Feb. 4, after taking last year off due to warm weather. Attendees undeterred by the snow and gusty wind had the option of hanging out and grabbing a hot drink inside the warming house. The club will host the next party from 1-3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 11; participants must bring their own skates.

– Kate Newton

Year of the Rooster

Fourth- and fifth-grade students from the Verona Area International School stopped by the Fitchburg Public Library Thursday, Jan. 26, to help kids and parents ring in the Year of the Rooster during a party celebrating the Chinese New Year. The students showcased their language skills (students at the school split their time learning in both English and Chinese) by reading to their younger peers, teaching them Chinese songs and leading them through crafts and activities inspired by the country's culture. The students had a busy week: besides the party, they also spent time preparing for their Jan. 28 performance at UW-Platteville, where they were set to sing and dance at a Chinese New Year event organized by the Confucius Institute, a Chinese organization that promotes Chinese language learning worldwide.

– Kate Newton



VAIS fifth grader Amelia Heil (at right) adjusts her classmate Serenity Gardner's hat design: the product of a very ambitious stint at the craft table.

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Fitchburg hosts state chess tournament

The Fitchburg Community Center hosted the 2017 Wisconsin State Championship Chess Tournament for all ages of U.S. Chess members on Jan. 21. Above from left, Tonio Ermakoff, 15, of Madison, defeats Joel Boeve, 15, of Beloit, during a timed chess game.

On the Web

To view more photos from the ice skating party, Chinese New Year party and chess tournament, visit: ConnectFitchburg.com

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Staying young through yoga

Senior center instructor shares ‘transformation’ with students

KATE NEWTON
Unified Newspaper Group

When sharing her own yoga journey with her students, Ellen Millar often passes out a brochure bearing the words, “Every accomplishment starts with the decision to try.”

Millar herself knows all too well the accuracy of the phrase, having grown from a yoga novice at the “ripe old age of 74” to a certified instructor at 76. But after walking out of a beginner’s class two years ago with a new “spring to (her) step” and much-needed relief from several “physical limitations” that had long hindered her movement, Millar now wants to share her experiences with her peers, including patrons of the Fitchburg Senior Center.

After teaching “Easy Yoga Plus” as part of the center’s “Aging Mastery” program earlier this spring, Millar has since led several class series that use gentle, slow-paced chair and standing yoga poses to focus on breath and mindfulness.

What initially began as a way “to stay busy and out of trouble” has since developed into a full-blown business. In addition to expanding her classes to several other area senior and community centers, Millar established her own LLC, The Wonder of Yoga, last June, and is currently undergoing training at Perennial Yoga to add to the certifications she already holds.

She also offers personalized “Yoga-Mobile” classes for groups and individuals at the location of their choice and gives presentations

‘They see somebody that’s struggling, and yet is making the effort, and that sends a strong message.’

– Yoga instructor Ellen Millar

and motivational speeches on coping with aging.

Millar thinks maintaining a novice-like approach despite her growing experience helps her students feel less inclined to believe yoga is an exercise tailored exclusively toward their younger, more flexible counterparts.

“When I stand in front of a class, I have trouble doing certain things, and I think that makes them feel comfortable,” she explained. “They see somebody that’s struggling, and yet is making the effort, and that sends a strong message.”

Bringing benefits

Millar touts improved balance and flexibility, extended range of motion, reduced stress and increased energy as some of yoga’s most impactful benefits, especially for her older students.

They’re benefits many of those students can attest to, including Verona resident Cheryl Jenkins, who said participating in Millar’s most recent class series has drastically improved pain in her hips and sciatic nerve.

“I used to take physical therapy for (the pain), and it would last



Photo by Kate Newton

Yoga instructor Ellen Millar greets her students at her Dec. 6 “Easy Yoga Plus” class at the Fitchburg Senior Center. Millar took her first yoga class at age 74 two years ago, and was so astonished by the benefits on her own “physical limitations” that she soon began training for instructor certification.

a little while, then it would come back,” Jenkins said. “But I haven’t had any problems since I started (the class).”

Another student, Fitchburg resident Joan Bloodworth, said she’s been mostly surprised to find yoga is “such a well-rounded thing that it does a lot more than just exercise,” while Sharon Brickl said Millar’s willingness to adapt her class to her students’ ability level has proven

what a “great teacher” she is.

“Ellen’s story just was amazing, I thought, and within reason, about anyone can do what she’s showing us,” Brickl said. “And if you can’t, she shows us how to adapt it, and it’s not intimidating. I think it’s especially attractive for seniors because the class is just easy to do.”

Millar also tries to incorporate an educational aspect into each of her classes, passing out handouts with breakdowns of different poses and other resources and even sometimes assigning “homework” for her students. She said they’ve surprised her by being “so open and receptive” to trying new things, like listening to chants and using essential oils during their practice together.

“The enthusiasm, especially in this group, I guess it’s more than I had expected,” she added. “This is something that’s been designed for them, they feel like it’s theirs and they really feel accepted and taken care of. I think that is a big part of it.”

It’s been “mind-boggling” to see the improvements in “mind, body and spirit” her students have undergone since starting to practice yoga, Millar said, as well as the “camaraderie” they’ve been able to develop as they’ve grown more open around each other.

The notion that her passion for yoga has created a “life ahead of (her) filled with endless possibilities” – another line found on the handout she shares – is something Millar plans to continue on in 2017. She sees as the year as an opportunity for gaining more personal growth and training she can then impart on her students, starting with a new “Easy Yoga Plus” 10-week series at the senior center that began last month.

“If you really apply yourself, you realize you’re into it deeper than just for the exercise,” she said. “It’s just transformative.”

Contact Kate Newton at kate.newton@wcinet.com.

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Madison West boys swimming



Photo by Jeremy Jones

Sophomore Henry Miller swims to victory with a time of 1 minute, 0.63 seconds in the 100-yard breaststroke Feb. 4 at the Big Eight Conference meet in Middleton. The Regents won seven of the 11 events to win the meet with 579.5 points.

Regents end Spartan dominance

Regents snap Madison Memorial's 19-year conference win streak

JEREMY JONES
Sports editor

Madison West boys swimming snapped a nearly 20-year streak of dominance by Madison Memorial as the Big Eight Conference

champions on Saturday, Feb. 4.

The Regents won seven of the 11 events to post 579.5 points, while the Spartans (498) finished third after the host Middleton Cardinals sneaked into second place with 550.5 points.

A close meet throughout, the Regents finished strong winning the final three events (100-yard backstroke, 100 breaststroke and 400 freestyle relay). Madison West's biggest finish of the day came in the 100 breast where the

Regents made up six of the top eight spots led by sophomore Henry Miller's meet-best time of 1:00.63. Fellow sophomore Gus Nordmeyer (1:02.38) added a second-place finish.

Sophomore Wes Jekel won the 200 IM title two events later in 1:57.69, as well as the 100 backstroke crown in 52.02. Junior Lain Weaver claimed victory in the 50 free (21.9) and the 100-yard butterfly in 51.4 seconds.

West won two of three relays

with Jekel and Henry Miller and junior Matthew Fernandez securing the 200 medley relay in 1:36.91. The Regents capped their victory by winning the final event with freshman Isaac Casey, Weaver, Sato and Jekel touching the wall in the 400 free relay in 3:14.8.

Senior Tyler Sato finished second to Memorial senior Drake Horton (47.87) in the 100 free

Turn to **West swim**/Page 16

VAHS boys hockey

Cats wrap up fifth conference title in 8 years

JEREMY JONES
Sports editor

Jack Anderson scored on a breakaway late in the second period to help the Verona boys hockey team clinch at least a share of its fifth conference title since moving to the Big Eight in 2009. Anderson was one of four different goal scorers on Feb. 3 for the Wildcats.

"(Defenseman) Jeff Bishop gathered the puck and Anderson flew the zone ... Bishop flipped the puck in the air to Anderson, who gathered at the far blue and was in alone with the goalie," Verona head coach Joel Marshall said.

Anderson made a slight fake then beat Cardinal goalie Sam Dunn with a high hard shot over the glove.

Getting the conference championship was a goal for the team since the start of the season.

"We dropped a few tough non-conference games to start the year, so we looked at the conference race where those losses didn't matter, as almost a clean slate," Marshall said. "I knew before the

Turn to **VAHS hockey**/Page 16

OHS wrestling Three Panthers make podium at conference

ANTHONY IOZZO
Assistant sports editor

For Parker Ehn-Howland, making the finals at the Badger Conference Tournament Feb. 4 was a long time coming.

The Oregon High School senior wrestler had missed conference his sophomore year with an injury, and he came back last season and took fifth at 160 pounds. But without any ranked wrestlers in Saturday's conference bracket, he knew he had a shot at a title at 170.

He fell short, losing to Reedsburg's Trey Haugen (31-5) in the final. But Ehn-Howland said it meant a lot to have the opportunity during his last high school conference meet and he added that now it will just motivate him to practice even harder to work on his strategy – making quick moves and keeping his opponent from thinking about the counter move.

"It is not how I actually

Turn to **OHS wrestling**/
Page 16

Edgewood boys hockey

Crusaders win 11th conference title since 2006

EVAN HALPOP
Unified Newspaper Group

After a 5-4 upset at the hands of Stoughton, the Madison Edgewood High School boys hockey team needed a win over Oregon on Feb. 7 at La Bahn Arena to clinch the Badger South Conference title.

The Crusaders held off the Panthers 3-2 with goals in the third period by juniors Carter Hottmann and Jack Royer, and Edgewood has now won every Badger South title since 2006, except 2010 when Stoughton won the title.

The Crusaders now have their eyes set on making a playoff run.

"If we keep building on our momentum, I think we will hit our stride going into the playoffs," Crusader senior forward Emmet Raichle said.

Senior forward Jacob Moore also scored a goal and assists came from freshman forward

Turn to **Edgewood hockey**/Page 14

What's next

Edgewood closes the regular season at 4 p.m. Saturday against Wausau West at Marathon Park. Wausau West is ranked second in the state behind Hudson.

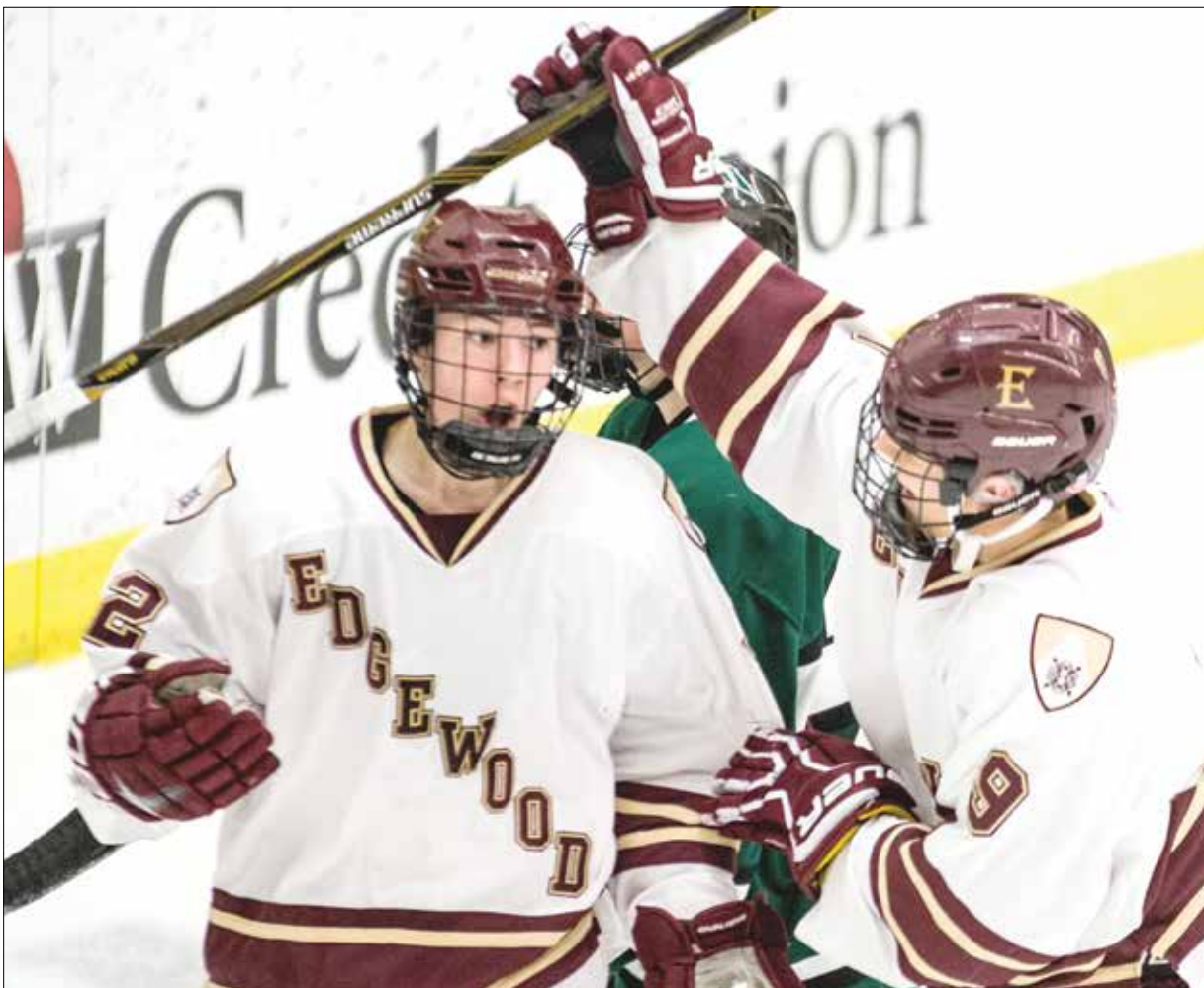


Photo by Evan Halpop

Edgewood sophomore defenseman Hunter Stracka (2) celebrates a goal with teammate freshman forward Drew Lenz, who had the assist, Thursday, Feb. 2, at La Bahn Arena. Edgewood won 4-0.

Edgewood boys swimming

Crusaders finish third at Badger South meet, ranked fourth in D2

ANTHONY IOZZO
Assistant sports editor

The Madison Edgewood boys swimming team had a tall order Feb. 3 in the Badger South Conference meet at Monona Grove High School.

The Crusaders are ranked fourth in Division 2, but the host Silver Eagles are the top-ranked team and have the top-ranked seed in seven of the 11 events in the state.

And while Edgewood finished with two champions and 10 total top-three finishes, the Silver Eagles won nine of 11 events to take first with 584 points.

The Crusaders took third with 338 points, behind Fort Atkinson (386 points).

Alex Moen won the 100-yard breaststroke in 1 minute, 3.51 seconds, and Truman teDuits won the 200-yard IM in 2:07.89.

teDuits added a runner-up finished in the 100 breaststroke in 1:03.68, and Moen and teDuits joined Tommy Beyer and Philip Fochios in the 400 freestyle relay to finish second in 3:25.2, behind the Monona Grove team

of Erik Doll, Jacob Lippiatt, Eric Storms and Ben McDade (3:15.20, a new meet record).

Fochios took second in the 100 backstroke in 55.14, behind Storms (51.9), and Moen added a runner-up in the 200 freestyle in 1:51.37, behind McDade (1:43.69, pool record).

Daniel Johnstone, Nate Frucht, teDuits and Fochios finished second in the 200 medley relay, once again behind Monona Grove. The Silver Eagles' team of Shane Sackett, Connor Keith, McDade and Storms won the event in a pool-record 1:38.15.

The Crusaders took third in the 200 freestyle relay. Beyer, Johnstone, Moen and Frucht finished in 1:35.01. Keith, Doll, Lippiatt and Sackett won the event for MG in 1:29.15.

Frucht added a third-place finish in the 500-yard freestyle in 5:09.47. McDade won the event in a meet record time of 4:38.73.

Fochios took third in the 500 free in 22.74. Doll won that event in 22.36.

Sectionals up next

Madison Edgewood now sets its sights on qualifying as many as possible to the state tournament.

The Crusaders travel to Stoughton High School at 1 p.m. Saturday for WIAA Division 2 sectionals.

The top finisher in each event from each of the four sectionals across Wisconsin automatically qualifies for the WIAA state meet. The remaining state qualifying spots are then selected based on the next 12 fastest times from around the state in each event.

Top-ranked Monona Grove, Baraboo, DeForest, Fort Atkinson, Jefferson/Cambridge, McFarland, Milton, Platteville/Lancaster, Stoughton and White-water are also in the meet.

The Crusaders are second in the sectional with times in the 200 medley relay, the 400 free relay and the 100 backstroke (Phillip Fochios). Fochios is also second in the state in the 100 back.

In Division 2, Edgewood is third in the 200 medley relay, fourth in the 100 breaststroke (Truman teDuits), fifth in the 400 free relay and fifth in the 200 free (Moen).

West boys hockey

Regents secure No. 5 seed for WIAA playoffs

EVAN HALPOP
Unified News Group

The Madison West High School boys hockey team limps into the postseason after dropping six of its last 10 games, but the Regents' early success allowed them to secure a No. 5 seed for the WIAA playoffs.

West opens up the playoffs against No. 4 Madison Edgewood at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 16, in a regional final at La Bahn Arena. The winner of that game will most likely play top-seeded Verona in the sectional semifinal on Tuesday, Feb. 21.

Sun Prairie is the 2 seed. Middleton, which the Regents host at 8 p.m. Thursday at Madison Ice Arena in the regular season finale, earned the 3 seed.

West 5, Oregon 3

West traveled to Oregon Ice Arena on Jan. 20 to take on sectional rival Oregon and pulled off a 5-3 win.

Sophomore forward Drake Baldwin, senior forward Cole Fuhrmann, senior forward Schuyler Hedican, sophomore forward Felix Jiang and senior defender Max Frey all scored goals.

Junior goalie Adam Buencamino had 23 saves.

Verona 6, West 3

The Regents traveled to



Photo by Evan Halpop

Regents junior goaltender Adam Buencamino picks up a save on a wrist shot by Madison Memorial sophomore forward Parker Lindauer Jan. 31 at Madison Ice Arena. The Regents won 1-0 over Madison Memorial, and Buencamino finished with 17 saves.

Verona Ice Arena on Jan. 27 with a chance to pull closer in the Big Eight Conference race but fell 6-3.

Senior forward Edwin Jiang, Frey and Hedican scored goals in the loss.

Buencamino had 29 saves.

Middleton 4, West 3

West traveled to Capitol Ice Arena to take on conference rival Middleton

and lost 4-3.

Junior forward Colin Pulkrabek, Baldwin and Frey all scored goals.

Buencamino had 24 saves.

Madison West 1, Madison Memorial 0

The Regents snapped a three-game losing streak on Jan. 31 with a 1-0 win over Madison Memorial at Madison Ice Arena.

Felix Jiang scored the game-winner, and Buencamino finished with 17 saves.

"We've been scoring more goals lately, but it didn't go that way tonight," Frey said.

West was 0-for-6 on power plays which hurt the offense, but the defense killed six penalties.

"It's nice to have another conference win," Hedican said.

Edgewood hockey: Regionals begin on Feb. 16

Continued from page 13

Payton Smith, senior defender Bryce Kessel, sophomore forward Jake Schmaltz, freshman forward Drew Lenz and sophomore defender Hunter Stracka.

Junior goalie Ben Cegelski had 25 saves.

Edgewood 3, West 0

Senior forward Fred Richards scored the first two goals, while Kessel added a third in a 3-0 win over Madison West on Jan. 20.

Senior forward Bryce Ternus, sophomore

forward Teddy Kluesner, Lenz and Stracka each had assists. Junior goaltender Shane Ryan finished with 13 saves.

Middleton 4, Edgewood 3

Edgewood traveled to Capitol Ice Arena to take on sectional rival Middleton and lost 4-3.

Moore, Schmaltz and junior defender Nathan Rehm all scored.

Senior forward Cale McCoshen, Smith, Lenz, Stracka and Ternus all had assists.

Ryan finished with 23 saves.

Stoughton 5, Edgewood 4

Edgewood was upset 5-4 Jan. 31 against Stoughton at Mandt Community Ice Arena.

Royer and Schmaltz scored in the third period to cut the deficit to one, but time ran out.

Schmaltz ended up with two goals, and Lenz added the other. Assists came from Hottmann, Royer, Stracka, Lenz, Ternus and Kessel.

Ryan finished with 13 saves, and Edgewood out-shot Stoughton 59-18.

Edgewood 4, Madison Memorial 0

The Crusaders returned to La Bahn Arena after a five-game road stand to take on sectional rival Madison Memorial and won 4-0.

If You Go

What: WIAA regional final against No. 5 Madison West

When: 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 16

Where: La Bahn Arena

What: WIAA sectional semifinal/final

When: Feb. 21/Feb. 24

Where: Higher seed/Capitol Ice Arena

Check wiaawi.org for up-to-date times and locations

Earning a No. 4 seed

The Edgewood Crusaders also earned a No. 4 seed in sectional 6 of the WIAA playoffs.

Edgewood hosts No. 5 Madison West at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 16, at La Bahn Arena in the regional final.

The winner of that game will most likely play top-seeded Verona Tuesday, Feb. 21, in the sectional semifinal.

"I feel our section is up for grabs, with a lot of good teams, anyone could win it," Crusaders head coach Pete Rothering said.

Sun Prairie earned the 2 seed, and Middleton is the 3 seed in the sectional.

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Wrestling

Daniels wins third Big 8 title

ANTHONY IOZZO
Assistant sports editor

Senior Brandon Daniels joined an elite list of Verona Area High School wrestlers on Feb. 4 – those with three conference championships.

Daniels is the third Wildcat to win three titles in the Big Eight, joining Eric Schmid (2012, 2014-15) and Ben Hanson (2011-13).

Verona joined the Big Eight in 2008 and wrestled in the Badger Conference before that. Ben Sarbacker (2005-07) won three titles in the Badger Conference, and Joe Sarbacker won four titles (2000-03).

“I didn’t really have too many tough matches,” Daniels said. “I am just having fun out on the mat and giving it my all for my last season.”

On Saturday, Daniels (30-5, ranked No. 6) pinned Sun Prairie’s Zach Perrich (29-13) in 35 seconds in the 145-pound finals. He started with two byes before getting a pin over Middleton’s Damian Benitez in 58 seconds in the semifinals.

Seniors Reagan Stauffer (182) and Jordan Recob (heavyweight), juniors Jono Herbst (113), Lance Randall (160) and Luke Slekar (160) and sophomore Porter Sundin-Donahue (106) also reached the podium.

“We wrestled better than we have been. A lot of the little things we were having trouble with all year, we definitely improved on that,” co-head coach Jason Ott said. “It is nice to see the improvement from the beginning of the year to the middle of the year to the end of the year.”

Herbst (14-16) finished third. After taking a 15-0 technical fall to Madison West’s Paxton Yang (21-10) earlier in the day, Herbst came back to beat Yang 8-4 in the third-place match at 106.

“It really motivates me to get better because it showed me I could beat people I never thought I would beat,”



Photo by Anthony Iozzo

Senior Brandon Daniels quickly pops up after pinning Middleton’s Damian Benitez in 57 seconds Feb. 4 in the semifinals of the Big Eight Conference meet at Madison East High School. Daniels won his third conference title with another pin in the finals.

If You Go

What: WIAA Division 1 regionals
When: 10 a.m. Saturday
Where: DeForest High School

What’s next

Verona is joined by DeForest, Fort Atkinson, Monona Grove/McFarland, Stoughton, Sun Prairie, Oregon and Watertown in the regional.

The top four wrestlers in each weight class advances to the Janesville Craig sectional. The team with the highest score earns a spot in the WIAA Division 1 team sectional at Elkhorn High School Tuesday, Feb. 14.

Herbst said.

Stauffer (13-14) finished fifth with a pin over Madison West’s Sam Mahoney at 182, and Randall (8-13) won 13-11 over Madison West’s Harrison Schreiber (12-23) for fifth place at 160.

Slekar also finished fifth with a 9-6

Turn to **VAHS wrestling**/Page 16

Girls basketball



Photo by Anthony Iozzo

Junior Brina James Goes up for a layup in the first half Feb. 2 against Middleton. James finished with seven points in a 65-57 loss.

Cats in Big Eight race despite falling to Middleton

ANTHONY IOZZO
Assistant sports editor

Although the Verona Area High School girls basketball team lost to seventh-ranked Middleton 65-57 on Feb. 2, there was a lot to build on.

The Wildcats (12-6 overall, 11-3 Big Eight Conference) continued to have trouble with turnovers and allowed nine 3-pointers, but they also battled back from a 21-point deficit with under 10 minutes to go to cut the first-place Cardinals’ lead to six with 20 seconds left.

Verona was much more aggressive to the basket in

the final 10 minutes and also turned the ball over just once during that stretch.

“I was really proud with the way we battled down the stretch,” Murphy said. “We could have folded, and we didn’t. We made it a great game. I think it gives us confidence if we get the chance to play them again.”

Middleton, which led 25-15 at halftime, built its lead at the start of the second half with a 20-9 run. Senior Bria Lemirande had two 3-pointers and a layup during that stretch, and she finished with 21 points.

Turn to **VAHS girls bb**/
Page 16

Boys swimming

Cats finish fourth at Big 8 Conference meet

JEREMY JONES
Sports editor

For the ninth consecutive year, the Verona Area/Mount Horeb boys swimming team has finished in the top four at the Big Eight Conference meet.

Bryce Hoppe (50 free, 100 breast), Zeke Sebastian (200, 500 free) and Shane Rozeboom (50, 100 free) each medaled in their individual events Feb. 4 inside the Middleton High School natatorium.

V/ME finished fourth with 251 points. Madison West held off the host Middleton Cardinals 579.5-550.5 to win their first conference title in over 20 years and Madison Memorial took third with 498.

Sebastian was the first Wildcat to earn a medal, securing a third-place finish in the 200 freestyle in 1 minute, 48.72 seconds. The senior added a second individual medal with a third-place finish in the 500 free (5:01.26).

The 50 free was Verona/Mount Horeb’s highest scoring event of the day, led by Hoppe’s runner-up finish. The senior posted a 22.34 – second only to Madison West junior Lain Weaver (21.9). Sophomore Shane Rozeboom touched the wall third in 22.47.

Rozeboom medaled in his other individual swim, matching the finish in the 100 free (49.54). He made his 50 free goal time, anchoring the 200 free relay team of Hoppe, Sebastian and Wellnitz to a runner-up finish in 1:29.99.

Hoppe turned in a third-place finish in the 100 breaststroke (1:02.39)

Bryan Touchett, Aidan Updegrove, Hoppe and Rozeboom took



Photo by Jeremy Jones

Bryce Hoppe competes in the 100-yard breaststroke Feb. 4 at the Big Eight Conference swimming meet. Verona Area/Mount Horeb finished fourth at the meet.

If you go

What: WIAA Division 1 sectional
When: 1 p.m. Saturday
Where: Middleton High School


seventh in the 200 medley relay (1:43.48).

The Wildcats’ relay team of Sebastian, Wellnitz, Touchett and Updegrove finished the day in seventh place (3:23.76) on the 400 free

relay.

Eight of 10 swims by the swimmers in the conference taper group were season-best times.

Kyle Hoppe dropped almost five seconds in the 200 IM and moved up from the 22nd seed to finish 16th. Aidan Updegrove cut seven seconds and made his fourth goal time of the season in the 500 free. Caulden Parkel shaved five seconds in the 500 free and made his goal time in the 100 free on the 400 free relay. Owen Rothamer made his goal time in the 100 fly.



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OHS wrestling: Five of six wrestlers place at conference meet, regionals up next

Continued from page 15

wanted it to turn out, but I can't make excuses. I just have to get back in the practice room and make stuff happen," he said. "I am looking forward to regionals and looking to be in the finals at regionals and making stuff happen."

Ehn-Howland (22-6) was one of three Oregon wrestlers to make the podium, joining junior Devin Keast (22-10) and sophomore Steele Mellum (22-12), who both placed higher than a year ago.

And of the six who wrestled for Oregon, five placed. Juniors Connor Brickley (12-17) and Sam Pieper (13-10) both earned seventh-place finishes, missing the podium by one spot.

"Without a doubt, it was our best tournament of the year as far as setting a plan during the week and as far as having a good week of practice," head coach Ned Lease said. "Our focus in general was just really good. Our overarching goal was to wrestle at our seed or over, and most of our wrestlers exceeded their seed."

Ehn-Howland pinned Waunakee's Preston Webster (27-8) in 1:16 to make the finals, and he pinned

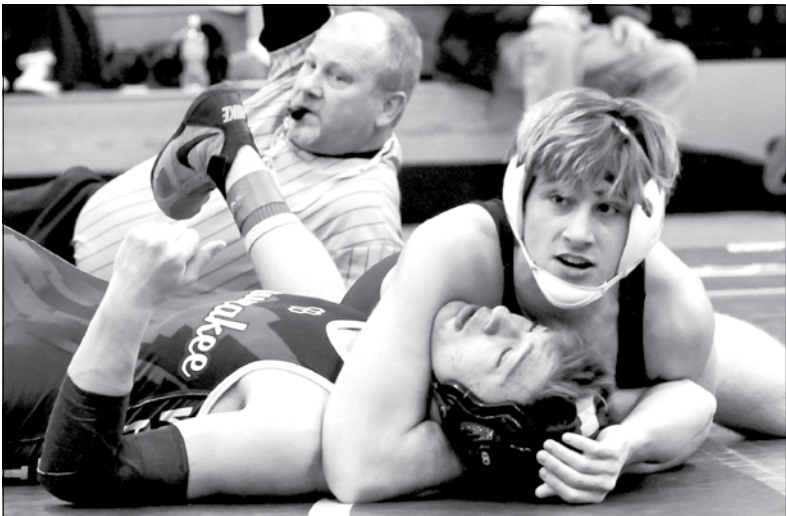


Photo by Anthony Iozzo

Senior Parker Ehn-Howland earns a pin over Waunakee's Preston Webster in the 170-pound semifinals Saturday in the Badger Conference Tournament at Monona Grove High School. Ehn-Howland ended up finishing runner-up, joining two other Panthers on the podium. Five of the six Oregon wrestlers at the meet placed.

Baraboo's Hunter Kluender (25-16) in 3:26 in the quarterfinals.

Against Haugen, the two grappled for control but remained in a stalemate for the first half of the period, but Haugen caught Ehn-Howland for a takedown and quickly gained control for a pin in 1 minute, 26 seconds.

"I was kind of sleeping, so he caught me sleeping," Ehn-Howland said.

Mellum finished fourth at 120 pounds, one place higher than last season, when he was fifth at 106 pounds. Keast took fifth at 152 a year after finishing eighth at 138.

Mellum made the third-place match with an 8-2 decision over Milton's Andrew Wells (6-6), but Sauk Prairie's Nick Zech got the best of him in a rematch from earlier the day.

Mellum had control at the start of the second period, but Zech (17-9) scored on a reversal. In the third period, Mellum escaped but could not get the takedown in the final seconds to fall 2-1 and settle for fourth place.

Mellum had defeated Zech 5-0 in the quarterfinals.

Lease said both the matches against Zech were close, but the long day got to Mellum a bit at the end.

"Sometimes the Badger Conference tournament can be more difficult a road than the state tournament depending on the weight class," he said.

Mellum's other loss was in the semifinals, to Reedsburg's Mason McMillen. McMillen, ranked fifth in Division 1, won a 21-2 technical fall.

Keast won his place match to take fifth. He pinned Sauk Prairie's Matt Bradley (25-13) in 2:12 after jumping out to a 4-0 lead with a takedown and a reversal.

Keast did not receive a bye and

finished 3-2 with both losses coming against ranked opponents. Keast dropped a close 3-2 decision to Milton's Nick Richards (33-11), who is ranked as an honorable mention, and fell in a 13-5 major decision to DeForest's Will Gahnz (29-12), ranked No. 12.

Keast's other wins came against Baraboo's Caleb Porter in an 8-4 decision and against Monroe's Patrick Rielly in an 11-2 major decision.

Brickley pinned DeForest's JC Olson in 48 seconds in his seventh-place match at 126 pounds. And that finish is one place higher than last season at 126 pounds and in 2014-15 at 113 pounds.

Pieper edged Mount Horeb's Miles Steinhoff 3-2 at 145 pounds to take seventh. Pieper missed last season with an injury, but he also took a seventh place as a freshman at 120 pounds.

"There is a lot of upside that is still waiting to happen in this junior class," Lease said. "When things fall into place for them, they are going to fall into place big."

Junior Collin Legler (9-19) also participated and earned a win at 132 pounds.

VAHS girls bb: Verona takes on Madison East next

Continued from page 15

Verona got points from senior Alex Luehring, senior Grace Schraufnagel, junior Chandler Bainbridge and junior Brina James during that stretch, but the points were spread apart. Middleton senior Alexis Thomas drained a 3-pointer to put the Cardinals up 45-24 with about 10 minutes left.

At that point, the Wildcats woke up. Bainbridge drove to the basket for a layup and then a drained 3-pointer, and senior Sisi Mitchell followed with a running layup to cut the deficit to 45-31. Middleton did counter with a 3-pointer from senior Alyssa Lemirande.

Bainbridge later hit another 3-pointer, and Schraufnagel scored on the traditional 3-point play and later added two free throws to make it 50-39. The Cardinals countered again with a 3-pointer from senior Carlee Lemirande.

Mitchell followed with a 3-pointer, but once again Middleton countered as Thomas hit a shot from downtown to make it 56-42 Cardinals.

"It is the best I have seen Middleton shoot in a while," Murphy said. "Once the game gets up to that many points, it is hard to beat them. They run that style and are pretty deep."

Bainbridge, who had 17 of her 21 points in the second half, connected on a 3-pointer to cut the deficit to 62-55, and she later added another basket to make it 63-57. But Verona was forced to foul and couldn't get any closer.

In the first half, the Wildcats stuck with Middleton early, with a Mitchell 3-pointer pulling Verona within 12-11 with under fives minutes to go in the half.

But the Cardinals ended the half on a 13-4 run.

"We had some turnovers, and when you turn the ball over versus Middleton, they make you pay. That is a veteran team," Murphy said.

Mitchell added 14 points for Verona, and Schraufnagel and Luehring each collected nine. James finished with seven.

Alyssa Lemirande and Thomas added

13 apiece for Middleton (16-2, 13-2).

Verona 64, La Follette 56

Luehring scored 33 points Feb. 4 as the Wildcats held off Madison La Follette 64-56 Saturday.

Verona led 29-20 at halftime and did enough in the second half to hold on.

Bainbridge added 11 points.

Verona 85, Beloit Memorial 51

The Wildcats jumped out to a 43-point at halftime Feb. 7 and earned an 85-51 conference victory at Beloit Memorial in a make-up game from Jan. 19.

Verona played mostly subs in the second half as ythe game went to a running clock.

Luehring scored 19 points, all in the first half, and James added 14.

Junior Aniah Williams led Beloit with 11.

VAHS wrestling: Cats look to get several to sectionals

Continued from page 15

decision over Beloit Memorial's Gustavo Badillo (4-14) at 152.

Recob (13-20) earned a 5-4 win in the fourth overtime against Madison Memorial's Ben Percy (19-8) in the quarterfinals, but he lost the next two

matches and finished sixth after an injury kept him out of the fifth-place match.

Sundin-Donahue (10-15) won 7-3 over Middleton's Don Polache (5-8) in the consolation round but also ended up in sixth place.

Zakh Kalifatidi (120), Caden Page (138) and Jeremy Grim (195) all

finished seventh. Nathan Feller (132) and Wyatt Breitnauer (170) finished eighth.

"All of guys have a really good shot to make sectionals," Ott said. "There are a lot of kids with an opportunity. It is just a matter if they wrestle well enough on Saturday to finish in the top four."

VAHS boys hockey: Cats earn No. 1 seed in sectional

Continued from page 15

season started the Big Eight would have a lot of parity, I believe I even predicted the conference champ would have three or four losses."

Janesville, which still had four games left in conference, could have forced the Wildcats to share the title. The Bluebirds tied Madison Memorial on Saturday, however, giving Verona the title outright.

Bishop got the Wildcats on the scoreboard four minutes into the second period - 15 seconds after a tripping penalty by Sun Prairie's Noah Nehmer. The visiting Cardinals answered a little less than one minute later, however, with a Travis Kernen even-strength goal.

Verona's Cale Rufenacht and Jake Keyes added a pair of insurance goals in

the third period, and Gareth Kaegi stopped 18 of 19 shots on goal to preserve the victory. Dunn had 27 saves for the Cardinals.

"Because we played well and won against all the other sectional teams on our schedule, we were able to get the No. 1 seed despite our 11 losses," Marshall said. "There is always a little added pressure with the No. 1 seed, however, we played many of these teams before and had a challenging nonconference schedule to prepare us for the post-season run."

Marshall said, in his 10 years of coaching at Verona, he has never seen this much parity in our section, from No. 1 through 7.

"Everyone has their big wins and bad losses during the season," he continued. "It should make for an existing tournament series in section 6."

West swim: Regents win seven of 11 events

Continued from page 13

with a time of 49.41 and fellow senior Will Altaweel just missed a medal, taking fourth in the 200 IM (2:01.86).

Senior Will Gerard, Sato, Fernandez and Casey added a fourth-place finish in 1:31.02. The Regents' 200 medley relay B team of sophomores Jaden Weiss and Constantin Bensch and seniors Jack O'Donnell-Mache and Jarrard also finished fourth in 1:40.41.

Other victories came from Middleton junior distance standout Michael Draves in the 200 (1:43.36) and 500 free (4:42.02), and Madison Memorial in the 200 free relay (1:29.63).

The Regents remained second to the Waukesha Blackshirts co-op on the

If you go

What: WIAA Division 1 sectional

When: 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 11

Where: Middleton High School


Wisconsin Interscholastic Swim Coaches Association's Division 1 list. Madison Memorial is third on that list.

West returns back to the Middleton High School Natatorium at 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 11, for the WIAA sectional meet.

The top finisher in each event automatically qualifies for state. The remaining 18 spots are then selected based on the top times from all the sectionals around Wisconsin.


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Boys hockey



Freshman Laszlo Orosz is unable to get his stick on a rebound in the second period Tuesday evening against Madison Edgewood. Oregon lost the game 3-2.

Panthers unable to wrap up conference title

JEREMY JONES
Sports editor

An upset of Madison Edgewood on Jan. 31 by the rival Stoughton Vikings meant the Oregon boys hockey team had a chance to at least earn a share of the Badger South Conference with a win on Feb. 7.

And the Panthers looked well on to that goal midway through the second period inside LaBahn Arena before giving up a pair of third period goals in a 3-2 loss.

The win gave the Crusaders their seventh straight conference title and the 10th in the last 11 years.

“We talked about winning conference, but we asked the guys, if you could chose — winning conference or going to state — which would you rather do,” head coach Mike Jochmann said. “I know every guy in that locker room would rather go to state.

“As a coaching staff, we’re just looking ahead to who’s next.”

Oregon’s defense stopped the initial game-winning shot about five feet in front of the crease, but the Crusaders kept fighting for the loose puck, and defenseman Jack Royer eventually chipped the puck up and over Panthers goaltender Henry Roskos with a

minute left.

The Panthers called a timeout but were unable to get the puck into the Edgewood zone or Roskos off the ice for an extra attacker.

Despite the outcome, Jochmann said it was the best he’s seen his team play — front to back — all season.

“Did we make some minor mistakes? Did Edgewood get some bounces? Yeah,” Jochmann said. “We had to work for every bounce tonight, sometimes that’s just not enough.”

An elbowing penalty late in the second period allowed Edgewood to tie the game 31 seconds in the third period on a Carter Hottman power-play goal.

“That goal hurt a little bit, but what can you do?,” Jochmann said. “All season long we’ve been trying telling the guys you have to keep playing if you get scored on. You can’t drop your head.”

Oregon had its chances to regain the lead with a couple of man-advantages, including a 3-on-1 break, which was shot off the pipe.

The Panthers weathered a barrage of quality scoring changes by the Crusaders over the first two periods.

“You build confidence everytime you score, but we knew Edgewood was a

good team that could come back on anybody,” Jochmann said. “I’m not sure we every lost confidence, we just needed to keep our nose to the grindstone.”

Oregon (17-5-1 overall, 7-2-0 Badger South) saw Edgewood (8-1-0) cut its lead in half as Jacob Moore backhanded the puck into a open net with bodies falling all around the crease.

The Panthers were without one of their top defenseman in Carson Timberlake, who spent the game on crutches. Senior forward Ian Schildgen slid back to defense in Timberlake’s absence.

“Is Ian a big guy with good skating skills and good puck control? Yeah,” Jochmann said. “Is he better positionally than in one-on-one situations than guys that have been playing back there all season? Probably not. He’s a forward and hasn’t had to deal with those situations.

But as far as that goes, dealing with a little bit of adversity, I thought he stepped in and did well.”

Whether or not Schildgen remains on defense depends on the extent of Timberlake’s injury, which should be known later this week.

Roskos finished with 41 saves, including 19 in the second period, as Oregon

was out shot 43- 27.

Ben Cegelski stopped 25 shots for Edgewood.

The Panthers close out the conference season Friday at home against Stoughton. They start the playoffs five days later.

“It’s a rivalry game, I don’t think anyone will overlook that Stoughton game,” Jochmann said. “If nothing else, we’re going to talk about it being a warm-up for the playoffs.”

Boys basketball

Oregon knocks off Monroe, Edgewood last month

ANTHONY IOZZO
Assistant sports editor

In one of the more impressive finishes for the Oregon High School boys basketball team this season, the Panthers secured rebounds and knocked down free throws in the final minute Jan. 27 to hold on for a 45-38 win against Monroe.

The Panthers led by as many as six points in the second half, but the lead was cut to 35-33 with 3 1/2 minutes to play.

Monroe senior Brayden Zettle — who finished with 10 points — knocked down a 3-pointer to cut the lead to 41-38 with 30 seconds to go, but senior Michael Landry had three defensive rebounds in the final minute to limit the Cheesemakers to one offensive rebound during that stretch.

Landry missed most of the second half with four fouls, coming out with 11:52 to go and not coming back in until only 2:56 remained.

“The big thing for us was playing with energy tonight, especially in the second half to get back into the game and hold that lead,” Landry said.

Oregon shut down

Monroe in the second half, limiting senior Alex Tordoff to four points after the 6-foot guard collected 11 in the first half.

The Panthers erased a 6-point deficit and started the second half on a 16-4 run.

“Our defense, all year, I think has been one of our biggest strengths. As far as offense goes, it helped that we slowed down our possessions and really worked the defense,” Landry said.

Edgewood 62, Oregon 51

The Panthers traveled to Madison Edgewood on Feb. 7 and Bultman scored 14 of his 16 points in the second half to lead Oregon to a 62-51 win.

The Crusaders led 24-23 at halftime, but the Panthers dominated the second half 39-27.

Moravec knocked down six field goals and was 4-for-4 from the free-throw line for 16 points, and Landry knocked down six field goals, including a 3-pointer, for 13 points

Victorson added nine, and Pearson collected eight.

Junior Mandela Deang led Edgewood with 19.

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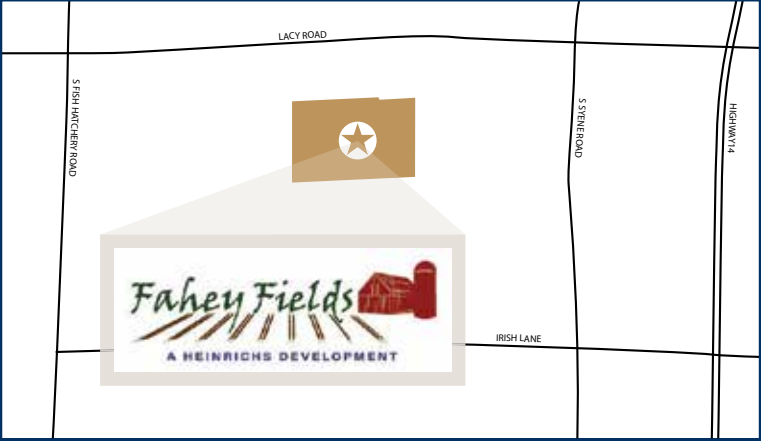
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Shawn Pfaff

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Kathleen C. Aiken

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Andrea Hedquist,
Owner/Designer




WINDOW FASHIONS & COVERINGS

Q. Where do I start on projects for the New Year?

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RETIREMENT COMMUNITY

Q. What kinds of things can I do to ensure my elderly mother doesn't feel isolated?

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Stephen Rudolph
FACHE, CSA

SENIOR CARE

Q. Are there jobs available to care for people in their homes?

A. The need for personal care workers will rise by over 50 percent through 2018, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, due to the rapid growth in the 65+ population and the growing desire of elders to continue living in the comfort of home for as long as possible. Personal care workers help elders safely and happily maintain an independent in-home lifestyle by assisting them with the activities of daily living. Home health care aides provide elders companionship as they perform light housekeeping and routine personal care duties. Their services vary according to each client's specific needs. They help clients get out of bed, bathe, dress, and groom, clean clients' houses, launder clothes, change bed linens, plan and cook meals, and make sure elders stay on diets prescribed for health maintenance.

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Kathleen Harwood
MS, NCC, LPC-IT, LMFT-IT, CPC

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Marc Jones

Age: 66
Family: Married; Four children, eight grandchildren
Lived in Fitchburg: All 66 years
Education: Oregon High School; Continuing education with AT&T over 31 years of employment; Leadership school with Communication Workers through Ohio State University
Occupation: Farmer; Owner, Jones Construction Co.; Retired AT&T
Political experience: Fitchburg Town Board (at time of incorporation); Fitchburg City Council; Primary loss for Mayor of Fitchburg (tied vote, lost coin toss); Dane County first 911 Committee; City of Fitchburg committees: Ag and Rural, others while on board and council
Other affiliations: Board of Directors, Heartland Credit Union, 16 years, current treasurer; Retired Communication Workers President and Vice President; National CWA Credentials Committee; National Safety and Health Committee



Jones

Questions

Why are you running for mayor?
The current mayor has not been able to unite the council to work for the good of the community. I can do that. The City of Fitchburg has a negative reputation with its neighbors and many of our citizens, I can fix that. The city has been very negative towards any development of existing areas, I can do better, and bring in tax revenue needed to keep our existing citizens from over taxation. I will unite the city staff to provide a positive experience when dealing with City Hall.

Should the city move up the Town of Madison merger date? Why or why not?
I do not believe that it should be moved up. It was set so each municipality had time to prepare for the merger. We should work closely with the Town Board and the Town Planning Commission so that at the right time, the merger goes smoothly.

Does the city have an ethical responsibility to financially support nonprofits that serve its residents like the Badger Prairie Needs Network or the Boys and Girls Club? If so, how should that funding be given out?
The city does have an ethical responsibility to support nonprofits, some of which we have a long history, but we must live within our budget (just like each of you have to do at home). City government budgets should be like the one your household lives within, it is only common sense.

Should the city focus its development in already developed areas or work to expand its development footprint?
The city now has a large area planned or ready for development. Both commercial and residential. We should stay within that area for development, but we need to take down the NO VACANCY sign, and work with people trying to come to Fitchburg.

How can the frequently disagreeing elements of the council work together?
The mayor needs to be a good leader, uniting ALL of the council members. The mayor needs to be a good leader, representing ALL of our citizens, urban and rural. We are not a district under the City of Madison, we are equal to them, and we are not governed by Progressive Dane, we are independent.

How should the city balance its public safety needs with climbing taxes, especially after the costs for both new fire stations have surpassed original estimates?
Balancing public safety and cost is always a struggle, but we have to use common sense, and live within our budget (just as each of you do at home). The council and I will prioritize the spending to keep it with our budget.

Do you support the city’s effort to create a public dog park, and what do you think of the outreach process that has taken place?
I support the idea. I have my own on our farm, not everyone has a farm. The location will always be controversial, but not the idea. The proposed location is not my first choice, but the city owns the land. If that is the choice, then we must keep the cost low, ask for donations, do the work with city staff if possible, keep the cost as low as possible, and keep looking for a location that is better, but within our budget, and be willing to sell land to get a better site.

If budgets and spending limits did not prevent it, what is one project you would champion to improve the quality of life in Fitchburg?
Railroad crossing safety. We are lacking on rail safety, I have personally helped remove people from the crossings, who were hit by the train, some fatality. It is a sleeping tragedy waiting to happen. We need to budget our spending, look for federal help, and try to improve safety at our crossings.

What is the best thing about Fitchburg?
Best city in the state. Agriculture, urban, a great mix. Good restaurants, good jobs, open spaces, bike paths, good services and WONDERFUL PEOPLE. I will help bring the open to businesses sign, so we can make it even better.

What does the city really need to work on?
Unity in the council, respect at council meetings (everyone). Build a respectful team at city hall so that EVERYONE feels welcome, and the city experience is positive (it’s negative now). Build respect with all of our neighboring communities (we were treated poorly one of our neighbors, that is why we became a city).

Age: 67
Family: Married to Nancy Arnold, two daughters, five grandchildren
Originally from: Springfield, Massachusetts
Lived in Fitchburg since: 1994
Education: BA, Johns Hopkins, 1971; MA, Johns Hopkins, 1972; PhD, Cornell, 1978



Arnold

Occupation: Retired Program and policy analyst, climate change adaptation, Wisconsin DNR, 2012; Infrastructure Practice Director, UW E-Business Consortium, 2006-2011; President and principal consultant, Arnold Consulting, Inc. 1991-2009; Co-founder and product manager, Joiner Associations, Inc., 1983-1991; Director of Conversions, Minitab Project, 1981-1983; Assistant Professor, ecology and statistics, State University of New York, 1977-1981

Employer/job title: City of Fitchburg/Mayor
Political experience: Fitchburg Mayor, 2015-present; Capital Area Regional Planning Commission/Commissioner, 2015-present; Chair, Fitchburg Plan Commission, 2015-present; Chair, Fitchburg Board of Public Works, 2015-present; Fitchburg Alder, District 4, Seat 7, 2005-2105; Fitchburg Public Safety and Human Services Committee, 2005-2013; Chair, 2009-2011; Chair or Vice Chair, Fitchburg Transportation and Transit Commission, 2005-2015; Fitchburg Delegate, City of Madison Transit and Parking Commission Contracted Services Oversight Subcommittee, since 2011; Academic Staff Representative, UW-Madison Transportation Committee, 2010-2011; Fitchburg Resource Conservation Commission, 2007-2015; Fitchburg Broadband Telecommunications Commission, 2005-2007; Chair, Fitchburg Ad Hoc Zoning Code Rewrite Committee, 2009-2010; Chair, Fitchburg Northeast Neighborhood Land Use Committee, 2008-2009;

Fitchburg McGaw Neighborhood Plan Steering Committee, 2008-2009; Vice Chair, Fitchburg Ad Hoc Committee on Substation Facility Planning, 2006
Other notable affiliations: Allied Drive Community Visioning facilitator, 2006; Dane County Council of Governments working group, 2004-2005; The Road Home (formerly Interfaith Hospitality Network) volunteer; United Faculty and Academic Staff, AFT Local 223, AFL-CIO; Fitchburg bicycle rodeo safety instructor; Blood donor; 1000 Friends of Wisconsin; Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals; Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin; Byrnewood Neighborhood Association (Past VP); Congress for the New Urbanism; League of American Bicyclists; MadCity Velo Club; Madison Area Bus Advocates; Sierra Club; Strong Towns; United Faculty and Academic Staff (AFT Local No. 223, AFL-CIO)

Questions

Why are you running for mayor, and why should people vote for you?
There is much work still to do to implement The Fitchburg Idea, that local government has a responsibility to provide opportunity for everyone. Many residents are limited by barriers to needed income, housing, education, medical care, and justice. With twelve years of local government experience, strong relationships with city staff and other stakeholders, and a desire to serve every resident, I will continue to listen to all those who live, work, and visit here, provide a clear, long-term vision for the future, and work with the Common Council to enhance the freedom and prosperity of everyone in Fitchburg.

Should the city move up the Town of Madison merger date? Why or why not?
Yes. As the end date for the Town approaches, it becomes more fragile to shocks like loss of a key person, building or equipment failure, or change in state laws. The risk of damage by such shocks can be reduced by orderly, early dissolution of the Town.

Does the city have an ethical responsibility to financially

support nonprofits that serve its residents like the Badger Prairie Needs Network or the Boys and Girls Club? If so, how should that funding be given out?
The city must create opportunity for everyone, investing where the need is greatest. Working with non-profit community development partners is effective and cost-effective, and should be expanded in areas like housing, education, recreation, and transportation. Stable funding for effective, well-run organizations provides the most benefit for the city’s investment.

Should the city focus its development in already developed areas or work to expand its development footprint?

Fitchburg has enough land permitted for development for a generation. Development of infill sites and redevelopment increase city revenue while minimizing the expansion of the city’s perpetual service and infrastructure maintenance obligations. Only new, complete communities centered on high-value urban development should be permitted in greenfield areas.

How can the frequently disagreeing elements of the council work together?
Council members have a responsibility to examine the substance of issues for the benefit of everyone in Fitchburg. Their job is to honestly deliberate in open meetings. Decisions based on discussion of objective facts and community values will be much easier to make than those based on personalities and alliances.

How should the city balance its public safety needs with climbing taxes, especially after the costs for both new fire stations have surpassed original estimates?
The city should meet its needs in the most cost-effective way available now, considering the complete life cycle of buildings, disregarding old estimates that were little more than bad guesses. Separately, the city should foster new development that maximizes revenue and minimizes new service and infrastructure maintenance obligations.

Do you support the city’s effort to create a public dog park, and

what do you think of the outreach process that has taken place?
I support dog parks in Fitchburg. They will provide healthy recreation for both dogs and their owners, and make our other parks safer and cleaner. The public, objective scoring of 11 city-owned sites by the Dog Park Advocates was exemplary. Now the Council and Park Commission must follow suit.

If budgets and spending limits did not prevent it, what is one project you would champion to improve the quality of life in Fitchburg?

Expanding fixed-route public transit and paratransit would make central city services available to those who don’t drive, provide new employees and customers (who must currently work and shop in Madison) to Fitchburg businesses, and allow seniors and the disabled to stay independent in their homes longer.

What is the best thing about Fitchburg?
Fitchburg’s greatest asset is its people and diversity: rural through suburban and urban, ethnic, economic, linguistic, and religious. We all benefit from Fitchburg’s complex, fine-grained variety. Other critical assets include our location adjacent to the seat of state government and flagship university, and home rule since incorporating in 1983.

What does the city really need to work on?
Fitchburg’s challenge is long-term resiliency and sustainability, “keeping things going in a healthy way long into an uncertain future”. Social sustainability requires affordable workforce housing, transportation freedom through public transit, and active living opportunities and healthy food in every neighborhood. Economic sustainability requires development that maximizes city revenue and minimizes service and infrastructure maintenance obligations. We need the future revenue from commercial development supporting the general fund, not projects that benefit only developers. For environmental sustainability, we must transition to renewable energy to protect our climate, and protect the land and water that is the source of all life.

Jason C. Gonzalez

Age: 32
Originally from: Born in Valparaiso, Indiana, raised on the south side of Madison, Wisconsin.
Lived in Fitchburg since: 2007
Education: Saint James Grade School, Edgewood High School, High School Diploma; University of Wisconsin-Madison, Bachelor of Science; University of Wisconsin-Law School, Juris Doctor (Doctor of Law).



Gonzalez

Occupation: Trial Attorney/ Small Business Owner
Employer/job title: Gonzalez Law Office, LLC, Principal
Political Experience: Alderperson District 3 (Seat 5) since 2013; Chair of the Personnel Committee; Vice Chair of Public Safety and Human Services Committee; Chair of Mayoral Ad Hoc Committee – City Hall Expansion Oversight Committee; Mayor Designee on Mayoral Ad Hoc Committee – Fire Station Oversight Committee; Alder & Vice-Chair on Transportation and Transit Commission; Alder on Parks Commission; Alder on Landmarks Preservation Commission.

Other notable affiliations: Paid-On-Call Firefighter/EMT since 2003 (Fitchburg Fire Dept. since 2007); Long time “Big” for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dane County; Pro Bono Attorney for Capital Solidarity Singers; Private Bar Defense Attorney for Wisconsin State Public Defender’s Office.

Questions

Why are you running for mayor?
Fitchburg’s a wonderful place to live with great potential, but suffers currently from failed leadership and an affordability crisis. Fitchburg needs a leader that can bring together this growing, diverse community and our City Council. We are barely addressing poverty and education. We need a leader not a divisive micro-manager.

Should the city move up the Town of Madison merger date? Why or why not?
City leaders need a better understanding of this event, to help us plan more successfully. We need to know more about the liabilities and the taxable assets at stake. When the original agreement was struck, we were not negotiating from a position of strength. Since the City of Madison is anxious to get this moving, we have a limited, but

rare opportunity to renegotiate. By marshaling our resources; tapping engaged community leaders, a more informed city staff, and empowered citizenry, we are likely to reach a better, more proactive agreement that most importantly protects Fitchburg taxpayers and reinvests in neighborhoods.

Should the city focus its development in already developed areas or work to expand its development footprint?
Infill development is preferable wherever possible, North Fish Hatchery is a perfect example, as it utilizes already paid-for infrastructure. We have plenty of green-field sites in our designated Service Area, i.e. — along the city’s eastern corridor. We’ll only need to consider expanding our footprint anytime soon if we hear from a major employer.

How can the frequently disagreeing elements of the council work together?
Council harmony is earned by getting to know one another and listening carefully to differing opinions. Coming in with a polarizing agenda is a sure recipe for divisiveness. Our current mayor is asking to be re-elected, yet has not a single endorsement from a sitting council member. It’s been my experience that when everyone else disagrees

with me, I’m probably the one who’s mistaken. This is the biggest failure of the current mayor. I will bring new leadership that is focused on a shared vision, the core values of our diverse community, and collaboration.

How should the city balance its public safety needs with climbing taxes, especially after the costs for both new fire stations have surpassed original estimates?
With 60 percent of our city taxes going to public safety it is clear we must find ways to increase our tax-base. Shared service agreements with our neighboring suburban cities (Verona, Oregon, Middleton) would be a start. The current mayor reworked fire-station plans, slowing down construction and costing city taxpayers millions.

Do you support the city’s effort to create a public dog park, and what do you think of the outreach process that has taken place?
A new public dog park is appropriate. There is demand for this amenity and the committee was diligent in pursuing the best options, holding many public meetings. Importantly, no new taxpayer investment is required. Fitchburg is getting a bargain on this one, but we also have to respect the concerns of the immediate neighborhood.

Forum: Star, audience questions focus on economic development, city's diversity

Continued from page 1

from personality conflicts. “(We need to) work on the issues and stop considering, ‘Whose idea was this and do I support that person?’” Arnold said.

Throughout the night, as he was often on the defensive, Arnold regularly returned to the idea that elected officials need to “work on what our policies are, what our values are and work for the citizens of Fitchburg.”

Jones said he would enter office with “no baggage,” leaving him the chance to build a rapport with each alder.

“I’m the best chance we have for change on the council,” Jones said.

Gonzalez said he, too, would work to establish that rapport, adding he would reach out to each alder on election night and begin meeting with them to get to know them “on a personal level.”

Structure

Gonzalez said another way to reduce the division within the council chambers is to change the city’s election cycle, which has each of the eight alders and the mayor up for re-election every two years. Surrounding communities typically have half of their alders up for election each year.

Both challengers also said they would operate the mayor’s office differently from how Arnold has, with Gonzalez specifically promising not to micromanage by sitting on any committees and instead have alders fill those roles.

“The mayor should be the voice, the advocate, the face of the city,” Gonzalez said.

Jones added that a mayor needs to focus on “empowering our city staff to allow them to do their jobs.”

“Be the guiding light, but empower them so they can lead the city,” he said. “You don’t have to babysit each



‘Local government has the responsibility to provide opportunity for everyone.’

– Steve Arnold

and every one.”

Arnold explained and defended his heavy involvement at the city level by saying “different people have different strengths.”

“I think I bring expertise and interest to a lot of fields,” he said. “I enjoy collaborating with city staff.”

Economic development

Jones and Gonzalez both said Arnold’s interest in collaborating does not extend to developers looking to build here.

Arnold disagreed with that accusation, asking audience members to decide for themselves whether development had occurred around the city in the past two years.

“Your own observations belie that,” Arnold told the crowd.

But Jones maintained that Arnold has a negative tone toward developers.

“I will help remove the ‘no’ signs that hang about this City Hall,” Jones said. “We need to have jobs brought into the



‘The failed leadership just isn’t working. We need a leader that can bring together this growing, diverse community, and I will be that leader.’

– Jason Gonzalez

city, and staff needs the help of the mayor to work with the developers to bring some jobs and bring some tax relief to you folks.”

Gonzalez echoed the idea of “no” coming from Arnold the past two years, saying he has “seen ‘no’ said to project after project,” specifically mentioning proposals from Sub-Zero/Wolf and Cameca Instruments.

“This is exactly what we’ve wanted there, and we’re fighting it,” Gonzalez said of the Cameca project.

Arnold defended his votes by saying Gonzalez was “not understanding the ‘no’” on the SubZero project and that his vote against Cameca was based “on architectural design, not their business model, not staying in Fitchburg.” He bristled at the notion that he should say “yes” to everything.

“Not all development projects are the same and are of equal validity,” he said. “Development projects also bring benefits and perpetual liabilities to the city, so they need to be weighed.”

The other two candidates agreed to that point, but maintained the attitude out of City Hall toward potential developers still needs to improve.

“Fitchburg is here to work for you, and ‘no’ is no longer going to be the answer,”



‘We cannot allow this government to be as dysfunctional as it’s been the last two years.’

– Marc Jones

Gonzalez said. “We’re going to consider each project on its merits, and then we will make a decision.”

The three disagreed on a question about a proposed quarry, something Arnold gave a flat “no” to.

Gonzalez said he’d have to listen to constituents, and Jones said he was open to the idea.

“Again you heard the mayor say, ‘No, no, no, no, no,’” Jones said. “That’s the tone that’s here.”

Diverse community

Candidates answered two questions related to racial and socioeconomic disparities, which are significant in Fitchburg and likely to grow when the Town of Madison merger is completed within the next few years, as many in the town are below the poverty line.

Gonzalez brought a personal touch, citing his experience as a Latino growing up on the south side of Madison and how far he had come as an example of success.

“I beat the odds,” Gonzalez said. “If you look at the racial disparities and our demographic data ... I shouldn’t be up here.”

Jones said the key to improving lower-income communities, especially for kids, is supporting volunteers who are working to help those kids.

“We have to work with the neighborhoods and work with the churches,” he said.

On the Web

The forum can be seen on FACTv until and after the Feb. 21 primary election:

fitchburgwi.gov/172/FACTv

Gonzalez stressed the importance of job creation.

“We need to find ways to bring employers to the city to empower people to have jobs,” he said. “I’m not talking about jobs at fast-food restaurants ... I’m talking about jobs that you can sustain a family on.”

Arnold pointed to specific partnerships, like developing a restorative court with the county and working with local groups pushing for better conditions for minorities. He also said creating new parks like the one planned for the King James Way neighborhood and Nine Springs Golf Course’s community focus as evidence Fitchburg was already moving in the right direction.

“We are working through these things, and old patterns are being changed for the better,” he said.

Sanctuary city?

Another issue the city is facing is the trend of adding the label “sanctuary city.” That’s been a particularly hot one since the inauguration of President Donald Trump last month.

The term means law enforcement and other municipal staff will not ask for a resident’s citizenship documentation during an interaction, and will not refer those they know are undocumented to the Immigrations and Customs Enforcement. With Madison having recently made a declaration of its status, the Chamber of Commerce forwarded the question of Fitchburg’s stance from two of its members.

Arnold told the crowd Fitchburg is “following those policies” but has not announced itself as a sanctuary city to avoid getting “into the crosshairs of the new federal administration and our state government.”

Gonzalez said it was “too early to take a stance” on the topic, and he wanted to see “a lot of vetting” from council members and the community.

Jones seconded that he would need further input to make a final decision, but said his “first broad brush” would be to not operate as a sanctuary city.

Contact Scott Girard at ungreporter@wcinet.com and follow him on Twitter @sgirard9.

The questions

1. At least half of the council will be new this year. What can the mayor do to ensure productive, rather than political debate?

2. What exactly is and should be the mayor’s role in running Fitchburg?

3. What should the city’s priorities be with economic development, and what would you consider the “best and appropriate” growth in Fitchburg?

4. How do you balance the needs of a city’s transportation infrastructure – roads, bus lines, paths – with a city’s budget limitations?

5. Have the needs of lower-income Fitchburg residents been getting enough attention in recent years from City Hall, and what else can the city realistically do?

6. Having a rural area within a city is a rare thing. What can the city do to help this area thrive?

7. Under your leadership, would Fitchburg be a sanctuary city?

8. Do you think the current and growing level of the city’s property taxes is acceptable? If not, what will you do to curb it?

9. A couple of years ago there was a quarry proposed on Grandview Road. What is your position in general on that sort of land use?

10. Tell us about a time when you were able to come to a successful compromise.

11. What are your plans to fix racial disparities and make a safer community for the many Fitchburg families that are in poverty?

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Parks picks spots for gardens, concessions

SAMANTHA CHRISTIAN
Unified Newspaper Group

Strengthening Fitchburg’s local food system has been on the minds of Parks Commission members over the last few months as City of Fitchburg staff explored sites for potential community gardens and food and drink concessions.

It’s a goal that’s been around since 2015, as reflected in the city’s Agriculture Plan and Comprehensive Parks, Open Space and Recreation Plan.

If there is interest, local residents could start to plant gardens at either Swan Creek Park or Belmar Hills Park this spring. And come summer, food and drinks could be sold at McKee Park, Dawley Conservancy and McGaw Park if the city receives viable proposals.

While some of those parks are already considered “signature parks” in the document, the addition of a community garden or concessions could enhance their identity by developing or expanding their “themes.”

At the Jan. 5 Parks Commission meeting, parks director Scott Endl said the intent is to create more diverse offerings in city parks. That includes developing community and social spaces that could contribute to the “overall vibe of the city park,” city resource/project planner Wade Thompson said.

“(It’s) something that really draws people to our parks and complements existing park uses,” without compromising the “active recreational” aspects of parks, Thompson added.

In an email to the Star, Thompson said “it’s important to note we have not planned a garden in these parks ... (and) no food/drink concession is yet planned at McKee, Dawley or McGaw.” So far staff is just gauging public and vendor interest.

Gardens

City staff are proposing to select a garden sites in 2017, with potential for gardening this spring.

The Common Council approved a resolution (R-190-16) at its Jan. 24 meeting allowing the Parks Commission to explore implementation of community gardens on two city park areas: Swan Creek (an area park on the city’s northeast side) and Belmar Hills (a neighborhood park on the city’s northwest side near the Boys and Girls Club).

These sites, with

contrasting attributes, were selected after a review of the garden site criteria, including surrounding land uses, population demographics and necessary infrastructure.

Endl and Thompson will vet these two locations to see if there is interest, especially by surrounding neighbors and gardening parties. Neighborhood meetings would likely take place toward the end of February.

Priority for garden plots would be given to neighborhood residents, Thompson said, but logistics are still being worked out “if there is additional demand from other city residents for garden plots at the selected park site.”

If a community garden is implemented, parks staff would oversee garden management.

Concessions

At its Feb. 2 meeting, the Parks Commission approved a document soliciting proposals for small-scale food and drink concessions that use predominantly locally sourced ingredients.

Examples of potential food and drink products include beer, wine, coffee, sandwiches, pastries and ice cream.

City park properties available for concessions could include McKee Farms Park, Dawley Conservancy and parks hosting organized recreational leagues or tournaments, such as McGaw Park. The document requests a more permanent concession presence at McKee and Dawley, using existing or expanded facilities, and a more temporary, movable presence, such as a cart or truck at parks like McGaw.

The city’s goal is to get the proposal document posted by the end of February, Thompson said, and proposals would likely be accepted for about a month. Parks staff would review and evaluate submitted proposals, bring them to the Parks Commission to make recommendations and then forward them to the Common Council for approval and referral.

If approved, the concessions would also be a revenue generator for the city and parks system, Thompson said. Staff would negotiate with vendors to pay the city a percentage of gross receipts annually or an annual flat fee.

Contact Samantha Christian at samantha.christian@wcinet.com.

Council considers plan, name for new dog park

Approval could be next month

SAMANTHA CHRISTIAN
Unified Newspaper Group

As fundraising continues, a proposed dog park plan and name for the Irish Lane and Fish Hatchery Road site is heading to the Parks Commission for potential Common Council approval in March.

The public will have another opportunity to weigh in on the plan at a public hearing at the March 2 Parks Commission meeting, when commissioners will likely also consider a proposed resolution about naming it Sunnyside Park.

If it moves through the parks and planning commissions on schedule, the council would review and possibly approve the dog park name March 14 and the plan March 28.

The park could open as soon as this summer.

The Fitchburg Dog Park Advocates are also in the midst of a \$50,000 fundraising campaign for amenities and improvements (kiosk, benches, picnic table, signage, bike rack, tree plantings, two waste stations and a marking station) through private donations. Members of the grass-roots group have pledged \$1,600 in matching funds for the month of February.

Parks director Scott Endl said once work begins at the site, it might generate

How to help

To make a donation to the Fitchburg Dog Park Advocates, visit: fitchburgdogpark.com/give.

If You Go

What: Dog park public hearing

When: 7 p.m. Thursday, March 2

Where: City Hall

Info: Scott Endl, 270-4288, scott.endl@fitchburgwi.gov

more interest from people who may want to contribute financially or eventually bring their dogs to the park.

At the Feb. 2 Parks Commission meeting, Endl said he is going through a checklist with city departments to finalize designs, cost estimates, annual park maintenance estimates and construction timelines.

The estimated \$50,000 cost of the infrastructure has already been budgeted with park dedication funds. That includes fencing, trails (likely made of crushed limestone) and parking. Endl said involving city staff in the project could save over \$10,000, but material costs would still be a factor.

Endl also got an estimate

What’s in a name?

District 4 Alds. Jake Johnson and Tony Hartmann and Ald. Jason Gonzalez (D-3) co-sponsored a resolution to name the dog park Sunnyside Park.

The name is in honor of the Wilkes family and their agricultural business, Sunnyside hatchery. The late Karl Wilke ran the chicken coop on that piece of land from the early 1950s to 1990s, employing multiple generations and providing eggs to its many hatcheries around Wisconsin. He and his wife Maxine, who will turn 95 this month, had also been active members of The Fitchburg Club.

The Common Council would likely refer out the park naming at its Feb. 14 meeting. The Parks Commission would then take it up at its March 2 meeting, and the council would vote on it at its March 14 meeting.

Johnson said the Wilke family (some of whom still live in the Hillside Heights neighborhood) wants to sponsor an engraved boulder with a plaque in recognition of the family, business and history of the land. The permanent boulder would likely be formally dedicated at the grand opening this summer.

for annual city maintenance: 69 hours (including snow plowing and lawn mowing), \$1,000 for dog bags (possibly offset by FDPA donations) and \$500 for general repairs.

As with other city parks, the dog park would not require an admission charge. However, the staff recommendation is to require people who bring their dogs to the park to have a dog license from the municipality where they live.

Typically before someone can obtain a dog license they need to show proof of

the animal’s shots, like a rabies tag on the dog’s collar.

While enforcing the requirement is an “evolving discussion,” Endl said, the main goal is to ensure the dogs are up-to-date with their vaccinations.

If any issues or concerns (such as dogs fighting) arise at the park, people can contact Endl, who would be the “dispatcher” to either handle the situation or involve the police department if necessary.

Contact Samantha Christian at samantha.christian@wcinet.com.

What’s next?

The dog park plan is scheduled to be referred out by the Common Council at its Feb. 28 meeting.

A public hearing is scheduled for the March 2 Parks Commission meeting, then the plan would likely go to the Planning Commission on March 21 and back to council March 28.

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Seeking caregivers to provide care to seniors in their homes. Need valid DL and dependable vehicle.

FT & PT positions available. Flexible scheduling.

Call 608-442-1898

adno=498232-01

PART-TIME POSITIONS AVAILABLE

(9 OR 24 HOURS/WEEK)

Sienna Meadows, a memory care home in Oregon, is seeking caring and motivated individuals to join its team. Currently hiring for the following:

- Part-time PM Cook (4pm-7pm)
- Part-time NOC Caregiver (10pm-6am)

Positions are 3 days/week, which includes every other weekend. Benefits available include dental, short-term and long-term disability, paid time off, and FREE life insurance (for 24+ hours/week only). Competitive pay based on training and experience. All training provided!

Apply online now at: www.siennacrest.com.

**Sienna Meadows
Irma Varela, Manager
989 Park Street
Oregon, WI 53575
(608) 835-0000**

Sienna Crest
Assisted Living, Inc.

Equal Opportunity Employer

adno=505913-01

HIRING EXPERIENCED LANDSCAPE CONSTRUCTION FOREMEN AND LEAD-MEN

All phases of landscape installation including brick/block & boulder wall construction.

~ Good driving record and CDL required

~ In-house training and outside classes available

~ Great pay, benefits & bonuses

Work with fantastic people who take pride in their work.

Apply online at: kittlesonlandscape.com/contact-form



We're Growing Thanks to Our Legal Customers!

adno=498987-01



City Hall - Main Line	270-4200
Administration	270-4213
Assessing	270-4235
Building Inspections	270-4240
City Clerk	270-4210
Economic Development	270-4246

We all win when you
Think Local First

FACTv	270-4225	Parks & Forestry	270-4288
Finance	270-4251	Planning/Zoning	270-4258
Fire Department	278-2980	Police	270-4300
FitchRona	275-7148	Public Works	270-4260
Human Resources	270-4211	Recreation/Community Center	270-4285
Library	729-1760	Senior Center	270-4290
Municipal Court	270-4224	Utilities	270-4270

5520 Lacy Road, Fitchburg, WI 53711 • www.fitchburgwi.gov

adno=505123-01

SUMMER JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Earn Cash • Have Fun • Build Skills

The City of Fitchburg is currently recruiting for a variety of summer employment opportunities. Positions available in Public Works, Parks, and Recreation.

- Program Coordinator
- Program Leader
- Tennis Instructor
- Parks, Streets, & Utility Maintenance Workers

Qualifications vary based upon position. Starting pay \$9.00 - \$10.50 per hour. For details and to submit an online application go to: <http://www.fitchburgwi.gov/187/Job-Openings>



Hurry! Jobs open until filled.

DANE COUNTY EXECUTIVE JOE PARISI HEADLINES FITCHBURG'S APRIL CLIMATE FORUM

Join us on April 5th from 7-8:30 p.m. as we welcome Dane County Executive Joe Parisi to the Fitchburg Library to discuss Dane County's new initiatives to address climate change. County Executive Parisi will highlight the new Office of Energy and Climate Change, the new Dane County Council on



Climate Change, and efforts to expand renewable energy and energy efficiency in the county. This annual forum is being sponsored by the Resource Conservation Commission, and is one of a series of events to foster a dialog among Fitchburg community members on a range of sustainability issues.

FITCHBURG REFUSE TAG PROGRAM

Under the Fitchburg Refuse Tag program, households may purchase refuse tags for disposing of additional refuse that does not fit into the refuse cart. Each tag allows you to set out one extra 32-gallon bag of refuse (which must weigh less than 50 pounds). Tags sell for \$18.00 for a sheet of five tags (2015-2019 price). You may purchase tags as needed at: Fitchburg City Hall and Hometown Pharmacy-Fitchburg. Please note



that Walgreens-Fitchburg will no longer sell the tags as of January 1, 2017.

SAVE THE DATE – ANNUAL FITCHBURG SENIOR CENTER FRIENDS PANCAKE BREAKFAST

SUNDAY, MARCH 19, 2017, 8 AM – NOON



RECREATION DEPARTMENT

For more information and to register visit www.fitchburgwi.gov/recreation, call the Rec. Dept. at 608-270-4285 or visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/fitchrec

Baby and Me - Dance Party

In this class we will work on socialization and exploration. We will use movement to get baby's minds stimulated. We will introduce simple motions to broaden awareness to their growing capabilities.

- Day/Time - Tuesdays, March 7 - March 28, 6:00-6:45 p.m.
- Location - Fitchburg Community Center
- Ages - 0-3 years old
- Fee - \$30

Baby and Me - Yoga

You will learn yoga poses that are good for you and your baby to do together. Each class will start with baby massage, stretching and relaxation breathing. We will move into standing yoga poses (moving our babies along with us). As babies grow they will be encouraged to try some poses.

- Day/Time - Tuesdays, March 7 - March 28, 7:00-7:45 p.m.
- Location - Fitchburg Community Center
- Ages - 0-3 years old
- Fee - \$30

Tunes for Tot's (Music & Movement)

This class is designed for children 1-5 years old and their parents. The classes are designed to enhance children's social skills, language skills, and fine motor skills through a playful environment. Classes will include several developmental activities, music and movement, musical instruments, props, finger plays, games and story time.

- Day/Time - Thursdays, March 2 - April 6, 4:30-5:15pm
- Location - Fitchburg Community Center
- Ages - 1-5 years old
- \$50



Kids Painting Class -

My Painting is Blooming!

For this class each child will be painting their own flower garden! While painting we will discuss primary, secondary and complimentary colors. We will also talk about bold, bright, colorful graphics. These paintings turn out colorful and whimsical and they are so much fun to do! Each child will take home their 16 x 20 painting.

- Day/Time - Saturday, March 18th, 1-3pm
- Location - Fitchburg Community Center
- Ages - 6-12 years old
- Fee - \$38

Welcome to Spanish -

Spanish for Preschoolers

Children ages 3-5 learn Spanish vocabulary and basic phrases in a fun and active way with these lively classes. Award-winning teacher, Marti Fechner of Grow into Spanish LLC, incorporates music, movement, games, stories and more to make learning Spanish easy and engaging for preschool-age children. It is easy for children to learn a foreign language at this young age, and SO beneficial. Come try it! It's a great way to prepare your child for a bilingual future.

- Day/Time - Wednesdays, Feb. 15th - Mar. 22nd, 1-1:45pm
- Location - Fitchburg Community Center
- Ages - 3-5 years old
- Fee - \$60

Wisconsin Martial Arts

Teaching a traditional Korean martial art containing thousands of kicking and punching combinations, weapons, joint manipulations, throws, ground fighting techniques, as well as Ki development, meditation, and healing arts.

- Classes - 4-6 years old, 7-15 years old and 16 and up
- Days/Times - Mon. & Wed., Mar. 1st-27th, 6-6:30pm (4-6 yr. olds) 6:30-7:30pm (older classes)
- Location - Fitchburg Community Center
- Fee - \$35 (4-6 yr. olds) \$45 (7 and up)

HOW TO MASTER THE AGING PROCESS

The Fitchburg Senior Center is proud to offer AMP, Aging Mastery Program, developed by the National Council on Aging. This program encourages the development of behaviors across many dimensions that will lead to improved health, stronger financial security and overall well-being. Participants will

meet 1x/week for 10 weeks to cover issues related to sleep, healthy eating, hydration, advanced planning, community engagement and more. AMP will be offered Wednesdays, 1:30-3:00pm from March 22nd-May 24th. Sign up today by calling 270-4290. Cost is \$25.



Aging Mastery Program

National Council on Aging

SNOW & ICE REMOVAL GUIDELINES FOR CITY OF FITCHBURG PROPERTY OWNERS

Property owners are required to keep sidewalks clear of snow and ice so that pedestrians can navigate safely. Fitchburg ordinance states:

Sec. 27-114.- Snow and ice to be removed from sidewalks.

The owner of each lot or part of lot shall remove or cause to be removed all snow and ice which may have fallen or accumulated upon the sidewalk in front of the premises which he/she owns not later than 6:00 p.m. of the day after the same has ceased to fall or accumulate; provided that when ice has so



formed upon any sidewalk that it cannot be removed, then the owner shall keep the same effectively sprinkled with sand, salt or other suitable substance in such manner as to prevent the ice from being dangerous, until such time as it can be removed, and then it shall be promptly removed.

The fine for failure to remove snow/ice is \$187. A notice/reminder is typically given to violators on the 1st offense, however NO warning is given for 2nd & subsequent violations.

Go to wisaltwise.com/homeowner for guidelines on effective salting and sanding practices that also protect Fitchburg waterways.

MOD brings ‘pizza with a purpose’ to Fitchburg

‘Fast casual’ restaurant opened in December

KATE NEWTON
Unified Newspaper Group

Even before MOD Pizza opened its Cahill Main location in December alongside its two other restaurants in the state, the rapidly-growing “fast casual” pizza company already got its cheese from – where else? – Wisconsin.

It’s only natural, then, that hungry Wisconsinites are drawn to MOD’s distinct, highly-customizable brand alongside pizza lovers across the country, allowing it to expand rapidly since founders Ally and Scott Svenson opened the first location in Seattle in 2008. Named “the fastest growing chain restaurant in America” by research firm Technomic last year, MOD now has 200-plus locations throughout the United States and United Kingdom, and is on track to open about 100 more by the end of this year.

When customers enter a MOD restaurant, they’re greeted with an expansive menu that allows them to personalize every detail of their meal using more than 30 different toppings, or simply opt for one of the menu’s “classic” individual-sized pizzas or hand-tossed salads.

The pizzas, cooked in a 730-degree gas fired-oven, can be ready in less than four minutes if a quick lunch is what you’re looking for. But MOD also offers beer on tap (the Fitchburg location has New Glarus Brewing Company’s Spotted Cow and Moon Man No Coast Pale Ale, as well as handspun milkshakes for the younger crowd) and plenty of seating for those who want to stay a while.

And if they sit in a booth toward the back, they can check out the restaurant’s signature “Wall of Fame,” a large display of photos tailored to each store that features familiar landmarks, high school mascots and dozens of candid shots of real customers and employees (the same four photos, featuring co-founder Ally Svenson and three other notable figures in the company’s history, can be found at every MOD location).

In a nod to the company’s family



Photos by Kate Newton

MOD Pizza employee Mark Booms slides a pizza into the restaurant’s gas fired-oven, which can cook a pizza in less than four minutes at about 730 degrees. The restaurant, located on Cahill Main, opened in December and is one of three locations in the state, with two more on the way.



MOD Pizza’s Fitchburg location is one of more than 200 locations of the fast casual restaurant, which specializes in customizable pizzas and salads. Customers can select from more than 30 toppings from MOD Pizza’s topping bar, above right, to add to their pizza or salad, and can either build their own or select from, and tweak, the restaurant’s “classic” items.

business roots, four of MOD’s 10 classic pizzas – the Tristan, Dillon, Caspian and Jasper – are named after the Svensons’ sons. They’re all popular at the Fitchburg restaurant, but Wisconsin district manager Krista Scott told the Star the “Mad Dog,” which has red sauce with mozzarella, pepperoni, mild sausage and ground beef, and the “Dillon James,” red sauce with mozzarella, asiago, fresh chopped basil, garlic, and sliced tomatoes, are

probably this location’s best sellers. The menu also offers gluten-free crust and seasonal items (right now, it’s the “Bob” pizza, with spicy chicken sausage, roast cauliflower and corn, white sauce, red onion, cilantro and mozzarella).

‘Above and beyond’

Despite being part of a fast-expanding network of restaurants, Scott said each location is encouraged to dig into its community by

supporting local causes and organizations.

The restaurant holds occasional percentage nights, collaborates on cross-promotional events with neighboring businesses like Bricks and Minifigs and donated about \$1,200 each to three area schools, including Aldo Leopold Elementary School, as part of its grand opening fundraiser in December – efforts that are all part of a philanthropic philosophy ingrained in MOD from

MOD Pizza

2960 Cahill Main, Suite 130
416-5224
modpizza.com

Hours: 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Sunday through Thursday;
10:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Friday
and Saturday

the beginning, Scott said. “Our culture is very important to us,” she said. “We want how we started it, what made us MOD, to really continue to be that intertwining fabric that holds all the stores together.”

MOD opened 100 new locations in 2016 alone, and Scott helped kickstart the company’s first two locations in Michigan before coming to Wisconsin. Fitchburg is one of three MOD restaurants to open so far in the state, with two more planned for Madison and the Milwaukee area.

She said while it’s been “exciting” to play a role in the company’s expansion, finding a home base in Fitchburg and bonding with a growing roster of regulars has been equally rewarding.

“We want to make them (customers) feel special,” she said. “You want to treat someone like they’re your friend or your family, and go above and beyond.”

“Above and beyond” is a philosophy MOD tries to apply beyond its customer service, Scott said, through its treatment of its employees, or “MOD Squad,” as well. The company maintains a program called the Bridge Fund to anonymously distribute financial assistance to applicants “who have encountered difficult times in their personal life and need an extra hand,” according to company press materials. And each store’s team – more than 20 people, ranging in age from high school seniors to middle age, work at the Fitchburg location – gets to provide input on what charities or organizations to support during events like the company’s “Spreading MODness” week every November. For five days, \$1 from every pizza sold goes toward that store’s chosen cause.

“‘Pizza with a purpose,’ that’s what we say,” Scott said with a laugh. “It’s more than just pizza.”

Contact Kate Newton at kate.newton@wcinet.com.

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